

The Year in **SPECIAL** **OPERATIONS**

2015-2016 EDITION

AFSOC **25 YEARS**

IN THIS EDITION

- > Iconic AFSOC Aircraft
- > The Ravens in Laos
- > Task Force Normandy



INTERVIEWS

- > AFSOC Commander Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold
- > AFSOC Command Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Caruso
- > AFSOC Wing Commanders



THE FLYER®

A FAMILY OF LIGHTWEIGHT TACTICAL VEHICLES

The Flyer® 72



THE MISSION IS EVERYTHING.



The Flyer® 60

MODULAR, MOBILE, MISSION-READY AND INTERNALLY TRANSPORTABLE. The Flyer Family of Lightweight, Tactical Vehicles brings superior off-road capability and mobility to the warfighters' ever-changing mission needs. Built for speed, endurance and transportability, the Flyer vehicles are capable of extended range across rugged terrain.

At 72" wide the Flyer® 72 is capable of internal transport in the CH-47 and C-130 aircraft; and can be configured to multiple crew size and payloads for specific mission sets.

The Flyer® 60 at 60" wide meets the V-22 IAT requirements and can be reconfigured in the field to go from light strike assault to rescue and recovery in under an hour.

Both vehicles are multi-role, purpose-built vehicles that share a high degree of common components; and share operation, maintenance and training similarities.

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Ordnance and Tactical Systems

In partnership with **FLYER DEFENSE, LLC**

www.gd-ots.com/flyer

Supporting the Warfighter with Next Generation Capabilities Today

Capabilities

Command, Control, Communications,
Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and
Reconnaissance (C4ISR)

Wide-Area Airborne
Persistent Surveillance (WAAPS)

Degraded Visual Environment
(DVE) System Solutions

Light Air Support (LAS)

Radio-Controlled
Improvised Explosive Device
(RCIED) Jammers

Transport Telemedicine
Systems (TTS)

Tactical Radio Application
Extension (SNC TRAX™)



C4ISR - Gorgon Stare - WAAPS



C4ISR - MC-130



C4ISR - King Air - VADER



C4ISR - DO-328 - Multi-Mission



C4ISR - PC-12 - Multi-Mission



C4ISR - C145 - Skytruck



LAS - A29 - Super Tucano



DVE System Solutions



RCIED Jammers



TTS



SNC TRAX™

snc SIERRA
NEVADA
CORPORATION®

www.sncorp.com



The Ponder family



Kimberly Vaughn



The Voas family



Mailani Walker

Help 5-hour ENERGY® support the mission of SOWF



The makers of 5-hour ENERGY® are grateful for the sacrifices our military

personnel make every day. That's why we're proud to support the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.

Now, you can too. Simply purchase a specially marked bottle of Cherry-flavored 5-hour ENERGY® now through July 31, 2015. When you do, a portion of the proceeds will help SOWF continue to provide college scholarship grants and much-needed counseling to the families of fallen Special Ops personnel.



**For more info
visit 5hourenergy.com/cherry**

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

*Special Operations Warrior Foundation is a registered trademark of Special Operations Warrior Foundation Inc. The makers of 5-hour ENERGY® will donate \$.05 for every cherry flavored bottle of 5-hour ENERGY® bearing the Special Operations Warrior Foundation Marks sold in the United States from May 1, 2015 through July 31, 2015 with a minimum donation of \$200,000.00 to Special Operations Warrior Foundation. For more information visit www.specialops.org. Special Operations Warrior Foundation does not endorse any brand or product. No portion of the purchase price is tax-deductible. Individual results may vary. See www.5hourenergy.com for more details. ©2015 Living Essentials Marketing, LLC. All rights reserved.

The Year in
SPECIAL
OPERATIONS
2015-2016 Edition

A man wearing a black hard hat and safety glasses is shown from the chest up, holding a white Wasp AE missile. The background is dark with some green and orange light effects. The text 'Wasp® AE' is printed on the side of the missile.

Wasp® AE

A white Switchblade missile is shown in flight, angled downwards. The text 'Switchblade®' is printed on the side of the missile.

Switchblade®

SENSOR *TO* SHOOTER SOLUTION

Combine the precision capabilities of the Switchblade tactical missile system with anyone of AV's family of small unmanned aircraft systems to provide real-time strike imagery that verifies mission accomplished!

Visit Us At

SOFIC 2015, Booth #2140

For more information visit www.avinc.com

A hand is holding a tan-colored GCS Hand Controller. The device has a small screen showing a live feed of a target area, several buttons, and a joystick. The text 'GCS Hand Controller' is printed below the device.

GCS Hand Controller



Editor's Note

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) on May 22, 1990, following the creation of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). Very much a child of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reform Act and the subsequent Nunn-Cohen Amendment, AFSOC was born in the dark shadow of Operation Eagle Claw, the failed mission to rescue American hostages from Iran 35 years ago. Out in the middle of a massive dust storm on an airfield codenamed Desert One, American special operations fell to its nadir, costing the lives of eight special warfare professionals in the burning wreckage of two collided aircraft. Yet Eagle Claw created the requirements and justification both for SOCOM and AFSOC as we know them today.

As the command begins to celebrate its 25th birthday, it does so from Kadena Air Base on Okinawa in the Far East, to RAF Mildenhall in Europe. And far from its founding roots built on elderly converted helicopter and cargo airframes, AFSOC is rapidly becoming one of the most advanced forces of aircraft in the U.S. Air Force today. State-of-the-art CV-22B tilt-rotors and a new fleet of C-130J Hercules-based tanker/transport, gunship, and psychological warfare broadcast aircraft now inhabit the AFSOC flight lines. These are the aircraft that all of SOCOM uses to get to the fights, provide gas and support to other aircraft in the theater, deliver world-class precision fires, and get the American message broadcast to the people below. Today's AFSOC was founded on the legacy of Operation Eagle Claw, but is built on the service and sacrifice of all the Air Force special operations forces that came before and after, and it is to those brave warriors that we dedicate this year's edition of THE YEAR IN SPECIAL OPERATIONS.

KYLE LAMB
Retired Sergeant Major, Delta Force



LEUPOLD

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

WE CHANGED CARBINE OPTICS FOREVER



The new Leupold® D-EVO™ (Dual Enhanced View Optic) allows for simultaneous long and short-range sighting. With the innovative Z-path design of the 6x20mm D-EVO, shooters can mount a red dot sight directly on the rail and effortlessly switch optics with a simple eye movement. No more changing head positions, switching power selectors, or breaking cheek welds. It's like having two primary optics at the same time.

LEUPOLD.COM

© 2015 Leupold & Stevens, Inc.



Contents



INTERVIEWS

- 10 Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold**
Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command
By John D. Gresham
- 88 Command Chief Master Sgt. Matthew M. Caruso**
Senior Enlisted Advisor, Air Force Special Operations Command
By John D. Gresham
- 110 AFSOC Today: The Wing Commanders Speak**
By John D. Gresham

FEATURES

- 16 SOCOM**
Navigating the Gray Zone
By Chuck Oldham
- 26 AFSOC**
New Commander with New Missions
Adjusts Modernization Plans
By Maj. Gen. Richard Comer, USAF (Ret.)
- 36 MARSOC**
Today Will Be Different
By J.R. Wilson
- 44 NAVSPECWARCOM**
Naval Special Warfare in an Uncertain
Global Security Environment
A Global Security Environment That Calls
for Special Operations Forces
By Rear Adm. Brian Losey

BEST OF BREED

"ASSIST" MULTI-FUNCTION RESCUE KNIFE



- 1** Blunted tip for enhanced safety during rescue operations
- 2** All-black version features non-reflective TICN-coated blade
- 3** Round Hole™ and Cobra Hood™ for positive one-handed deployment
- 4** VG-10 stainless steel blade with high-performance combination edge
- 5** Scissor-cut rope-cutting feature
- 6** High-strength back lock
- 7** Built-in survival whistle
- 8** Retractable carbide glass breaker for window breaching

Spyderco
OpFocus

820 Spyderco Way
Golden, Colorado U.S.A.
303.279.8383
800.525.7770
www.spyderco.com
OpFocus@Spyderco.com

GSA Contract #H4560



FNH USA

NEW FOR 2015

FN CSR™-20 SNIPER RIFLE

CHAMBERED IN 7.62x51MM

FNH USA IS PROUD TO OFFER THE U.S. ARMY THE FN CSR™-20—A COMPACT SEMI-AUTOMATIC 7.62 CALIBER SNIPER RIFLE WITH PROVEN HERITAGE IN COMBAT. THE FN CSR™-20 TAKES ALL THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SOCOM FN SCAR® MK 17 AND MK 20 TO CREATE A NEW LIGHTWEIGHT, COMPACT PRECISION SNIPER RIFLE.

- **EXTREMELY MODULAR DESIGN ALLOWS RAPID UNIT LEVEL MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINMENT**
- **LOW PRODUCT AND MAINTENANCE COSTS**
- **PROVEN SUB-MINUTE MOA**
- **PROVEN ON BATTLEFIELDS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WITH MK 17 AND MK 20**
- **BARREL LIFE IN EXCESS OF 10,000 ROUNDS**



MADE IN THE U.S.A.

FNHUSA.COM/SCAR-FAMILY



DISTINCT ADVANTAGE™

Contents



52 USASOC: Enduring Commitment

By John D. Gresham

62 International SOF Review

By Nigel West

72 Fuerzas Comando

To Be the Best of the Best

By John D. Gresham and Shawn E. Gorman

80 AFOSC at 25: Busy Before Birth

By John D. Gresham

94 Iconic AFSOC Aircraft

By Robert F. Dorr

104 Gunship Update

By Scott R. Gourley

130 Pave Low Leaders

By Maj. Gen. Richard Comer, USAF (Ret.)

142 The Ravens and the Secret Air War in Laos

By Dwight Jon Zimmerman

150 Special Mission V-2

Col. Holger Toftoy and the Operation That Brought German Rocket Technology to America

By Dwight Jon Zimmerman

159 Product Showcase

TACOPS

Innovation, Not Imitation



CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS

*from the makers of the Original
M9 Assault Medical Backpack*

- Medical, Response and EOD Kits
- Logistics Services Solutions

TSSI

SOLUTIONS FOR THE SELECT FEW®

TSSI-OPS.COM / sales@tssi-ops.com

TOLL FREE 877 535-8774



“GEICO is a
faithful supporter of
MILITARY personnel.
My family and I
APPRECIATE it!”

--Elena S., Oregon

Whether you're Active Duty, Guard, Reserve or Retired, visit **geico.com** or call
1-800-MILITARY now to see how much you could save on car insurance.

Don't forget to ask about our unique benefits for Military members, too.

Special Discounts ★ Storage Plans ★ Flexible Payment Plans

Over 75 years of savings and service.

GEICO[®]
MILITARY

geico.com | 1-800-MILITARY | local office

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states or all GEICO companies. Discount amount varies in some states. One group discount applicable per policy. Coverage is individual. In New York a premium reduction may be available.

GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. GEICO Gecko © 1999-2014. © 2014 GEICO

The Year in **SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

2015-2016 Edition

Published by Faircount Media Group
701 North West Shore Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33609
Tel: 813.639.1900
www.defensemecanetwork.com
www.faircount.com

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief: Chuck Oldham
Consulting Editor: John D. Gresham
Managing Editor: Ana E. Lopez
Editors: Rhonda Carpenter
Contributing Writers: Maj. Gen. Richard Comer, USAF (Ret.), Robert F. Dorr,
Shawn E. Gorman, John D. Gresham, Scott R. Gourley, Rear Adm. Brian Losey,
Nigel West, J.R. Wilson, Dwight Jon Zimmerman

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Art Director: Robin K. McDowall
Project Designer: Daniel Mrgan
Designer: Kenia Y. Perez-Ayala
Ad Traffic Manager: Rebecca Laborde

ADVERTISING

Ad Sales Manager: Art Dubuc
Account Executives: Steve Chidel, Brandon Fields, Jim Huston,
Charlie Kottmeier, Patrick Pruitt, Adrian Silva

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

Chief Operating Officer: Lawrence Roberts
VP, Business Development: Robin Jobson
Business Development: Damion Harte
Financial Controller: Robert John Thorne
Chief Information Officer: John Madden
Business Analytics Manager: Colin Davidson

FAIRCOUNT MEDIA GROUP

Publisher, North America: Ross Jobson
Publisher, Europe: Peter Antell



©Copyright Faircount LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction of editorial content in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Faircount LLC does not assume responsibility for the advertisements, nor any representation made therein, nor the quality or deliverability of the products themselves. Reproduction of articles and photographs, in whole or in part, contained herein is prohibited without expressed written consent of the publisher, with the exception of reprinting for news media use. Printed in the United States of America.

AT-802U

SURVEILLANCE

PRECISION STRIKE

DIRT STRIP UTILITY



**THE 802U: MULTI-MISSION
VERSATILITY TO ADAPT AND
OVERCOME. IT'S TOUGH, POWERFUL
AND RAPIDLY DEPLOYABLE.**

IT'S AVAILABLE NOW.

802U.COM



MANUFACTURED BY AIR TRACTOR INC. OLNEY, TEXAS

Interview with Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold

Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command

By John D. Gresham

Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold is the commander, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Hurlburt Field, Florida. The command is the Air Force component of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and provides Air Force special operations forces (SOF) for worldwide deployment and assignment to unified combatant commanders. The command has approximately 19,000 active-duty, Reserve, Air National Guard, and civilian professionals. Heithold enlisted in the Air Force in 1974 and spent three years at Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), New Mexico, as an F-4D avionics technician. He was commissioned in 1981 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at the University of Arkansas. He has commanded at the squadron, group, wing, and agency levels, including serving as the commander of the 451st Air Expeditionary Group in Southwest Asia and as the commander, Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency. His staff assignments include positions on the Air Staff and a unified command staff. Prior to his current assignment, he was the vice commander, United States Special Operations Command.

The Year in Special Operations: What are your thoughts on the anniversary of AFSOC?

Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold: This is a special year as we are fast approaching our command's 25th birthday on May 22. In 1990, the 23rd Air Force was designated Air Force Special Operations Command, and we proudly took our place as an Air Force major command. Our nation expects that we have the people and capabilities needed to quickly address our nation's most threatening adversaries, and that's something that hasn't changed over the years. Even before we were a major command, we were providing special operations airpower across the globe.

Can you reach back in your own memory and recall some of the things you saw the Air Force SOF community do during the time before AFSOC became a major command?

I've been in the special operations community since the mid-1980s and I'm proud that we've always answered the nation's call to carry out sensitive missions anytime, anyplace. Before AFSOC stood up, we still provided SOF airpower, but we were more limited in the types of aircraft we owned and the size of our force. We flew MC-130Es, AC-130Hs, CH-3Es, and UH-1Ns, while our Air Force Reserve and National Guard partners flew AC-130As, EC-130Es, and HH-3Es. We have grown since then in both responsibility and scope, from the days of serving as the 23rd Air Force to standing up AFSOC in 1990. Now we fly two types of MC-130s, three types of AC-130s, EC-130Js, manned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft as well as unmanned

remotely piloted aircraft, the CV-22 vertical lift platform, and non-standard aviation mobility aircraft. We also have a Combat Aviation Advisor mission and an entire Special Tactics wing. We have grown to many times the size we were in the 1980s, to a force of some 19,000 people, and we are now a major command. What has not changed is that Air Commandos have always proven themselves quiet professionals, working to accomplish the mission as a dedicated team, regardless who receives the credit.

What do you remember of the atmosphere around special operations prior to the passage of Goldwater-Nichols and Nunn-Cohen in the late 1980s?

I entered special operations in December of 1985. At the time, SOF was in quite a bit of turmoil after the tragedy in the desert in Iran five years earlier. There was a lot of new attention being placed on the community, so I made sure to read the entire Holloway Report. I think I was the only captain in the squadron who did. I was the 16th Special Operations Squadron Chief of Tactics then, and I was focused on what gunships could have done better in the Iran mission; recall that gunships were planned to fly on night two, supporting the hostage extraction. I was very interested in emerging night-vision goggle tactics, techniques, and procedures because they weren't commonly used then. I remember thinking, "how can I get my unit better prepared to execute the mission if we had to do it again?" This goes to show that there was a feeling of wanting to improve the effectiveness of special operations at all levels, even down in the squadrons.



PARTNERS IN FREEDOM



Use of this U.S. DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.



Battle-Proven Support for a No-Fail Mission

From headquarters to the components to the tactical edge, L-3 is a proud partner of the elite Special Operations Forces (SOF). We provide 24/7/365 global support for a wide range of IT mission needs. Our solutions speed the delivery of technology and drive down costs while improving performance and increasing customer satisfaction. In all we do – from systems engineering to agile software development and cyber defense – we never forget the people we serve and the sacrifices they make for our freedom.

To find out more, please visit our website at L-3NSS.com.

BELOW: Then-Brig. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold (right) speaks with Dan Richardson and Kevin Kelly in front of the AC-130U gunship after a release ceremony at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. Maintainers repaired the gunship in only 146 days and four days ahead of schedule. **RIGHT:** U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, speaks during the 352nd Special Operations Wing activation ceremony March 23, 2015, on RAF Mildenhall, England. The 352nd SOW comprises more than 1,200 active-duty and civilian Airmen performing missions on MC-130J Commando II and CV-22B Osprey aircraft for AFSOC.



When the enabling legislation (Goldwater-Nichols/Nunn-Cohen) was passed in the late 1980s, what were your feelings as a young U.S. Air Force SOF aviator when you realized that Congress was about to give you and the rest of your fellow special warfare brethren a service-component community of your own?

Speaking as a SOF aviator, Goldwater-Nichols and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment were the most significant acts of Congress to affect my career. Out of these pieces of legislation sprang United States Special Operations Command with a four-star officer at its helm, enhancing SOF interoperability and fostering joint cooperation and training. I lived through the change and it was a good one. I watched SOCOM, and then on the heels of that, AFSOC, stand up. It all unfolded from inside the same building that I sit in today. I've had many years to reflect on the act that provides separate funding for SOCOM and habitual joint training opportunities, such as Emerald Warrior, which is taking place right now. I think personally, one of the most significant effects of Goldwater-Nichols was that it meant there was not going to be an attempt to "stove-pipe" unique solutions by the services. By the legislation's very nature it ensured teamwork. As part of SOCOM, we present a unified portfolio of diverse SOF capabilities,

and as Air Commandos, we organize, train, and equip airmen to execute those missions in concert with our brothers and sisters from the other services.

What are your personal memories from the Invasion of Panama (Operation Just Cause) in December 1989, and what were AFSOC's particular achievements?

The operation took place in 1989, but the planning and training started in May of 1987. I was a captain then, again working as the 16th Special Operations Squadron Chief of Tactics. My squadron commander, Howie Chambers, came and got me, taking me off to a secret location right here at Hurlburt Field, in a tent with wire around it, and briefed me in. There, we started the initial planning for Just Cause. Bringing all of the components together to do the training together was quite an experience for me. To train with the soldiers that we were going to directly support with the gunships – it was the beginning of my joint planning experience. All of the focused training that we had done to practice seizing airfields, which was a capability that came out of the Iran hostage rescue mission, paid off.

Sight Unseen



STRIX VL

STRIX IR

STRIX

Tough, versatile tactical lighting for military and law enforcement users

- Multiple mounting options: helmets with or without a rail system, MOLLE clip, around the head or neck
- Two versions: infrared capable (IR) or visible light only (VL)
- Four visible light modes: red, green, blue, and white
- Bi-axial design for 120° vertical and 180° horizontal rotation



scan to watch
product in action



www.petzl-tactical.com/strix



Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, Air Force Special Operations Command commander, speaks with 352nd Special Operations Wing Special Tactics Airmen, Oct. 27, 2014, on RAF Mildenhall, England. Heithold visited the 352nd Special Operations Wing to discuss the vision and priorities of the AFSOC community.

What are some takeaways from your time as AFSOC commander?

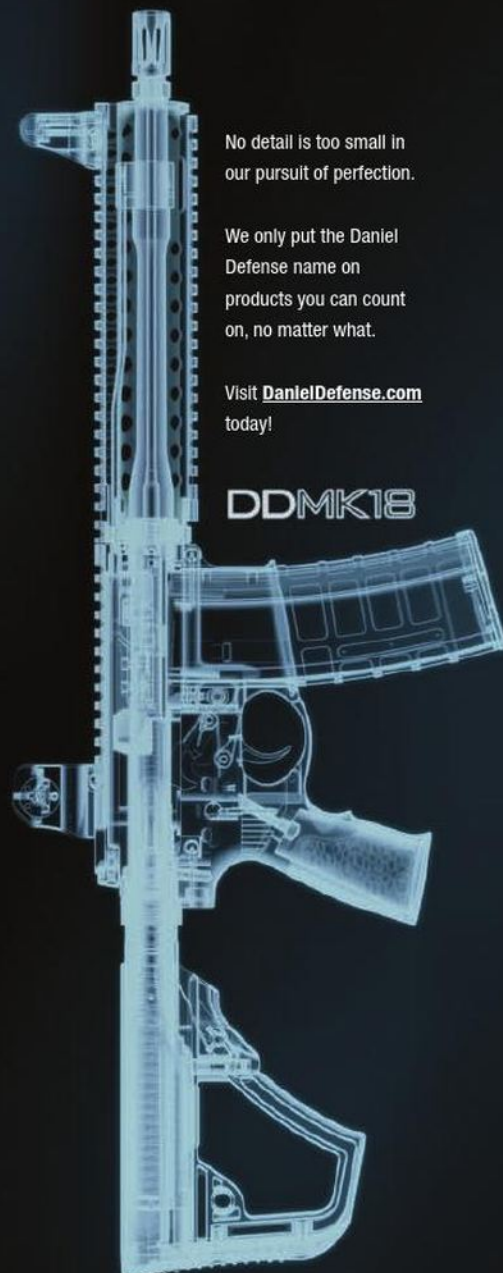
First, AFSOC is an incredibly dynamic place right now. Our is as high as I have ever seen it, and our people are knocking it out of the park every day. Our people's ability to get the mission done doesn't depend on proximity to the fight – they will get it done right, whether in garrison or on the front lines. The Air Commando, "quiet professional" ethic is strong, and I am very proud to be a part of this team.

We are engaged all over the world. Our forces are on five continents and bring a diverse range of talents to their missions. Our aviation wings and groups continue to make huge impacts across the world in combat zones and training environments. We have the most decorated unit in the Air Force: the 24th Special Operations Wing. Many of our support specialties have won Air Force-level awards, recognized as the best in the business. Each of the Air Force Crosses, Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Meritorious Unit Awards, and Gallant Unit Citations have stories behind them that pay tribute to all of our Air Commandos who have deployed into harm's way. All of our Air Commandos have made meaningful contributions to the struggles of this generation, and many of the stories will remain untold.

This is a special year for us – the 25th anniversary of AFSOC – and I've designated it the "Year of the Air Commando." This year will simply highlight our Air Commandos and their accomplishments. It started with a ceremony we recently held to remember those we lost during our command's watershed moment in history, Operation Eagle Claw in 1980. This is the 35th year since that tragedy played out in Iran at Desert One. Our next Commando Rally meeting in May will continue to honor this heritage, and we will host all of our Air Force SOF general officers and senior commanders at that event. This will culminate in our annual Outstanding Airmen and Civilians of the Year Awards Banquet, where we highlight our best of the best. Our Air Commandos are the best in the world, and this is our time to pay tribute to them as they create their own AFSOC history. ■

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN CHRISTINE GRIFFITH/US

THE DDM4'S BEAUTY IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP.



No detail is too small in our pursuit of perfection.

We only put the Daniel Defense name on products you can count on, no matter what.

Visit DanielDefense.com today!

DDMK18

DANIEL DEFENSE®

PROUDLY AND EXCLUSIVELY
MADE IN THE USA

FIND US ON



A 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion critical skills operator surfaces from the ocean and advances onto a beach during a combat dive exercise in Key West, Florida, Feb. 18, 2015. The operator's team spent a week in Key West practicing various maritime operations skill sets, further solidifying the development of their techniques, tactics, and procedures.



Navigating the Gray Zone

By Chuck Oldham

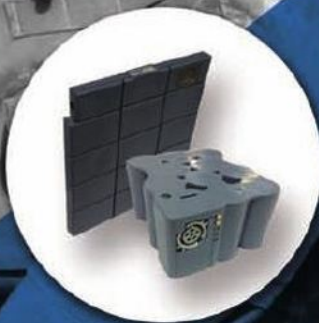
WHEN U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (USSOCOM) Commander Gen. Joseph L. Votel testified before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) in March 2015, he described the nation's special operations forces (SOF) as deeply engaged across the globe and achieving notable successes, but also, because of that very success, increasingly in demand. Far from seeing the expected drawdown of forces and missions as troops have been pulled out of Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation's special operations forces are being called upon to take up new commitments in addition to ongoing missions and operations.

The demand signal for SOF has, if anything, increased as the security environment has changed. Certainly there has been some steady progress, enough so that in the Philippines, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) is being stood down and replaced with a smaller U.S. commitment, since the threat of Abu Sayyaf has significantly degraded. The commitment in Afghanistan is winding down through Operation Resolute Support. The successful partnership with Colombia and other Latin American partners has nearly eliminated the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC) and is helping tamp down transnational organized crime in the region.

On the other hand, the rise of the Islamic State (ISIL), especially in Syria and Iraq, has meant new demands on SOF forces, as in Iraq, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF), trained by U.S. Special Forces, are leading the fight. While U.S. SOF have been authorized to train and advise local forces in the fight against ISIL, President Barack Obama is trying to expand their missions on the ground. In Europe, Vladimir Putin's Russia has annexed the Crimea and is supporting proxies striving to take the eastern provinces of the Ukraine. In Africa, Boko Haram continues to bomb, kidnap, and kill civilians as well as its government opponents. In strategically important Yemen, Sunni, Shia, al Qaeda, and Islamic State forces are vying with each other for control of a country on the brink of civil war. Important ongoing training and

U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY CPL. STEVEN FOX

Portable energy storage, advanced hybrid energy solutions,
batteries and energetic devices for every soldier.
Designed. Developed. Deployed.



Total Power System Solutions

EaglePicher™
Technologies, LLC
An OM Group Company

Visit us at
SOFIC Booth #718

WWW.EAGLEPICHER.COM





West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare assets participate in an international maritime training evolution.

partnership commitments in countries worldwide must continue as well.

Today's security environment is characterized not only by the violent religious extremism, resurgent nationalism, hybrid conflict, and non-state actors with which we have become familiar, but also by the variety of powerful and destructive tools that are readily available to a range of actors who had not previously had that sort of power or influence, for good or ill. Witness the rise and fall of expectations associated with the "Arab Spring."

"Within states, it is becoming much easier for aggrieved populations to network, organize, and demand change to the status quo; we have seen this in a number of locations across the world," Votel told Congress.

"Across state boundaries, violent non-state actors such as ISIL are exploiting local grievances among populations to advance their own horrific ends. Their methods routinely violate international norms and challenge regional governments' capabilities to respond. These groups rely upon their ability to build common identities with sub-sets of disaffected populations and magnify the potential for violence. Other non-state actors have more criminal inclinations and avoid law enforcement while building their power and influence.

"Between states, technological advancement is providing rising powers more options to pursue their interests. In some cases, countries are seeking to

expand their claims of sovereignty outside of recognized borders. In other cases, they are sponsoring and relying upon non-state actors to act on their behalf abroad. Traditional approaches to deterrence are increasingly inadequate – particularly as some states are becoming adept at avoiding conventional military responses while advancing their interests through a combination of coercion, targeted violence, and exploitation of local issues. Russia is taking this approach and is systematically undermining neighboring governments and complicating international responses to its aggressive actions."

Unconventional strategies are becoming more prevalent, requiring new approaches to counter them. Such strategies seek to destabilize a government or accomplish an adversary's goal while not crossing a line that would lead to conventional military retaliation. Social media are playing an increasing role in motivating and organizing protests or other action. Cyber attacks are another unconventional threat that can do great harm in a networked society and are also hard to trace back to the perpetrators.

"Actors taking a 'gray zone' approach seek to secure their objectives while minimizing the scope and scale of actual fighting," Votel said in congressional testimony. "In this gray zone, we are confronted with ambiguity on the nature of the conflict, the parties involved, and the validity of the legal and political claims at stake. These

conflicts defy our traditional views of war and require us to invest time and effort in ensuring we prepare ourselves with the proper capabilities, capacities, and authorities to safeguard U.S. interests.”

Special operations forces are particularly important in this new security environment because of their ability to respond with a wide range of capabilities. Votel told Congress that SOCOM’s advantage in this environment is built upon its persistent engagement, enabling of partners, and capability for discreet action when called for.

In ensuring American SOF continue to be prepared and equipped to operate and succeed in this gray zone of conflict, Votel said he has identified a series of objectives for SOCOM.

“I was very fortunate to assume command of a headquarters that was already operating at a high level,” Votel told *The Year in Special Operations*. “But that didn’t mean we wouldn’t benefit from an azimuth check, and a review of our efforts and goals. That’s why I sat down early on with all my commanders and set out to define our collective priorities. After talking with the command’s senior leaders, I saw five objectives as essential for USSOCOM and all of special operations forces.

“My first of these priorities is to ensure SOF maintains the readiness level required to accomplish the missions the nation expects of us. In order to maintain that readiness level, we will need to develop the right people, with the right skills, and provide them with the right capabilities to meet current requirements as well as the requirements that will emerge in the future. This means we must remain faithful to the first SOF Truth: Humans are more important than hardware. We will do this by investing in our people to ensure they have the right skills, the opportunity to develop their talents, and have equipment that will enhance their capabilities.”

Votel’s testimony before the HASC stressed that maintaining superior selection, training, and education for the force is a continuing goal, as is developing operators with the language and cultural expertise essential to building relationships and operating in complex situations. “Operational success for SOF often depends on being able to establish relationships with key partners. The strength of those relationships is founded on culturally attuned, regionally trained operators interacting directly with foreign officials and security forces in their own language,” Votel said in his statement to the HASC.

“Next, we must be successful in the role in keeping U.S. citizens safe and ensuring the nation effectively deals with today’s national security challenges. This will be done by following strategic Department of Defense guidance and serving as the global synchronizer of special operations and the provider of special operations forces in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders [GCCs]. When the GCCs are successful, we are successful. When the GCCs win, the nation wins,” Votel told this publication. Today, U.S. SOF are deployed to more than 80 nations worldwide, he told Congress, and are supporting 10 named operations. More than 3,500 personnel are deployed forward, with another 7,000 in support of GCC requirements on any given day.

“Third, relationships are the cornerstone of the SOF mission,” Votel continued. “This means we must continue to build relationships in order to increase our situational



Green Berets from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) review the performance of Honduran TIGRES and provide guidance to improve their movement and marksmanship while clearing rooms inside a shoot house during Close Quarters Battle Training Feb. 25, 2015, on Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The TIGRES, a counternarcotic and counter-trafficking force, traveled from Honduras to the United States for the first time to train with their Special Forces partners.

PHOTO BY CAPT. THOMAS CIESLAK



awareness and understanding. The greater our situational awareness and understanding, the better we will be able to offer realistic, effective options for policymakers. Our relationships across the interagency and coalition partners have already had a positive impact. They have strengthened our ability to coordinate on matters such as hostage rescue, the movement of foreign fighters, international training, and developing the capabilities for responding to shared threats.”

SOCOM has been building international and interagency relationships over the years since 9/11, recognizing the necessity of multiple approaches to today’s problems in the gray zone. Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLOs), for example, were introduced in 2007

and have become part of building a network of international partners, Votel told Congress. SOLOs now operate in every GCC’s area of responsibility and are resident in embassies in 15 nations to advise and assist in the development of partner-nation SOF capacity, according to SOCOM. Similarly, liaison officers from more than a dozen partner nations currently work at SOCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida.

Likewise, SOCOM’s Special Operations Support Teams (SOSTs) coordinate and collaborate with other government agencies, from the departments of Justice and the Treasury to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). SOCOM has also expanded its support to the Theater Special



U.S. Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, speaks with Staff Sgt. Dustin Gorski, a Pararescueman from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron, during a visit to the Human Performance Center at Kadena Air Base, Japan, Dec. 15, 2014. Gen. and Mrs. Votel toured the facilities and met with staff members to see the program's efforts in support of the Preservation of the Force and Family initiative.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ZADE VADNAIS

Operations Commands (TSOCs), realigning 800 SOCOM billets to aid TSOCs in planning, intelligence analysis, and communications, as well as building out communications infrastructure and adding operations support capacity, Votel said to Congress.

And while SOCOM continues to expand and enhance global partnerships, traditional partnerships, and international relationships through SOF missions such as Foreign Internal Defense (FID) continue to pay dividends.

"Foreign Internal Defense remains one of our most cost-effective tools, and the potential return on investment is almost incalculable due to the unpredictable nature of future conflicts," Votel told *The Year in Special Operations*. "Despite that unpredictability, we know SOF conducts FID missions at a minimal cost because SOF generally conducts these missions with a small number of seasoned operators, very few enablers, and at the length of time and training to the level that is needed to support both partner-nation and U.S. national objectives.

"There are several examples I can point to that would show the importance and effectiveness of FID," he continued. "First to come to mind is our efforts to support the Republic of the Philippines, which began not long after 9/11. Our partnerships and engagements with the Philippine security agencies, along with other U.S. governmental agencies and NGOs [nongovernmental

"Over the past decade, USSOF has transitioned from focusing on tactical-level, episodic training, and is now conducting persistent-presence engagements with professional soldiers at all levels of command. From the tactical to the strategic, including key leadership engagements up to the ministerial level, we are developing a high level of trust, credibility, and rapport over the long haul with our nation's partners."



organizations], have achieved increased security capabilities and capacity for the Armed Forces of the Philippines [AFP], Philippine National Police [PNP], and other Philippine Security Forces [PSF], which have thwarted domestic and transitional terrorist threats to the Philippines. Some of the training provided included training in basic human rights, which has positioned the PSF to extend the rule of law for Filipino citizens to have access to an improved legal system and better governmental institutions. These successes are at the heart of the FID mission and are examples of the hard work of the Philippines government with support from the U.S. country team, USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development], DOJ [Department of Justice], and

International Criminal Investigation, Training and Assistance Program [ICITAP]. Having achieved all this, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines [JSOTF-P] will transition May 1, 2015, and U.S. support to Philippine counterterrorism efforts will transfer to rotational U.S. military units. JSOTF-P's transition reflects the maturity of the Philippine Security Forces, both the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, and is a testament to the current capacities and continued growth of the Philippine Security Forces' capability to handle internal security threats.

"Successes like this have led to a shift in FID strategy. Over the past decade, USSOF has transitioned from focusing on tactical-level, episodic training, and is



A U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Control Party member observes as an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft flies overhead during a close air support mission while participating in Emerald Warrior 14 at Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 1, 2014.

Connect. Protect. Enable.

Delivering enterprise IT solutions to help our national security customers:

- Stay connected, wherever they are, 24x7x365
- Remain protected from threats in cyber space
- Focus on accomplishing their critical missions, efficiently and effectively

IT Infrastructure
Cyber Security
Cloud Computing
Mobile Solutions
Software & Systems Development
Mission Analytics

Serving our U.S. national security customers at home and around the world.

sra.com

GIVING YOUR CAPABILITY **THE EDGE**

To meet US warfighters' wide-ranging mission requirements, Saab has developed the M3 MAAWS – a flexible shoulder-mounted weapon. Its powerful combination of versatility, affordability and reliability ensures that our ground forces are always well-equipped to counter any threat in any environment.

Saab Defense and Security USA LLC provides solutions and technology that are at the core of defense and homeland security. Our *thinking edge* enables us to deliver innovative, swift and highly effective capabilities that give our country's warfighters the advantage.

www.saabgroup.com



SAAB
Defense and Security

now conducting persistent-presence engagements with professional soldiers at all levels of command. From the tactical to the strategic, including key leadership engagements up to the ministerial level, we are developing a high level of trust, credibility, and rapport over the long haul with our nation's partners. The JSOTF-P transition exemplifies the latest shift in our strategy as we look to our operational support team construct that empowers small numbers of SOF embedded with our partners to provide operational planning support to enhance partner-nation operational capability.

"All this means that our national return on investment can be seen in important and measureable ways. Specifically, this is evident when our partners demonstrate how they've developed into a capable force that can go against an adversary or even when they become a regional exporter of security. Either way, our partner nation's increased capability alleviates the strain on U.S. forces and our fiscal resources. The FID mission supports and enhances the idea that local and regional issues are best answered by a local or regional response," Votel added.

"Fourth, preparing for the future means we must invest in SOF that will be able to win in an increasingly complex world," he continued. "Key to this is the ability to adapt and being an innovator of strategic options. This means we will focus on developing concepts, training, doctrine, education, and research that are future oriented and challenge current operational thinking."

Along with an open mind toward new ideas, Votel has described a strong experimentation, capability analysis, and development process that will help American SOF prepare for an uncertain and changeable future. A robust schedule of war games and experiments will also continue to build the interoperability, integration, and interdependence between conventional forces and special operations forces, as well as interagency and international partners, that will be vital in order to effectively deal with gray zone challenges.

Technology is also a part of preparing for the future. SOCOM conducted combat evaluations that led to development of advanced weapons and state-of-the-art sensors for MQ-9 unmanned air systems. Working alongside the Army and Navy, SOCOM also developed lightweight armor protection for AFSOC's CV-22 Osprey fleet in less than six months in response to an urgent operational requirement, according to congressional testimony. While special operations has always been about equipping the man rather than manning the equipment, SOCOM's Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (TALOS) program has captured the imagination of the press and the public. And while the press calls it an "Iron Man suit," for special operators, near-term technologies are spinning off of the innovative acquisition program now.

"The TALOS task force has identified a number of technologies that are along the path to the combat suit which are candidates for transition to SOF, conventional forces, and potentially other government agencies in the near term," Votel reported for *The Year In Special Operations*.

"Last year, we developed an increased tactical data storage capability, which is currently transitioning to our forces to fulfill an immediate operational requirement. This new capability will allow for 10 times the capacity of current-day data storage with an added weight of only 6

ounces. The team also discovered a novel armor solution, and shared it with USASOC, who now uses it on their non-standard commercial vehicles.

"This year the team is working on transitioning a small, individual soldier SATCOM antenna, an unpowered, loadbearing exoskeleton for reduced soldier fatigue, and a powered cooling vest to sustain body temperature and improve individual performance.

"Next year, we anticipate transitioning five technologies, including a next-generation antenna that includes dynamic tuning, the Future Interoperable Radio Enclosure (FIRE) with current and future radio modules, a tactical radio sleeve for cell phones, lightweight multi-hit ceramic-metallic hybrid armor, and a biosensor-equipped combat shirt that can monitor a soldier's physiological status."

Taking care of all of those in America's special operations forces as well as their families remains of paramount importance, Votel emphasized. "The fifth priority is the foundation, the essential underpinning, of the other priorities and everything else," Votel continued. "We must preserve our force and their families. We must ensure their short- and long-term well-being. People – military, civilian, and families – are our most important asset. We have always prided ourselves in the way we have taken care of our people, but after more than a decade of war, their well-being and resiliency is our primary concern and focus. In order to preserve our special operations force and families, we are taking a holistic approach that focuses on human performance, psychological performance, and social performance of not just our service members but their families as well."

Over the past 14 years, the typical service member in special operations has deployed four to 10 times, and frequently had less than a year at home between deployments, Votel told Congress. More than 50 percent of the force is married with children, so repeated deployments have put a particular strain on families. More than 2,500 SOF service members have been wounded or killed in action, and more than 7,500 are in the SOF Wounded Warrior program, many suffering from traumatic stress. While the demand for SOF appears to be a fact of life into the near future, Votel stressed that SOCOM has been striving to ease the strain on its troops as best it can with the resources it has.

"It's important to note that we've always anticipated that the demand signal for SOF would remain high and planned accordingly," he stated for this publication. "When you talk about issues like optempo and dwell time, you're really talking about the people – military, civilian, and families. They are hands down our most important asset, and we remain committed to our efforts to take care of them, build resilience, and ensure readiness. Among those efforts, our perstempo policy is a key tool; it helps to increase predictability by establishing thresholds for dwell time – a minimum 250 days at home station [head on pillow] or a maximum of 480 days away in a 24-month period (730 days), with a 12 months back and 12 months forward window. With this information at their fingertips, SOF leaders can make informed decisions that balance training, career progression, readiness, retention, and operational demands with the long-term health of the individual, the family, and the force." ■



AFSOC: New Commander with New Missions Adjusts Modernization Plans

By Maj. Gen. Richard Comer, USAF (Ret.)

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN MAESON ELLEMAN



The MC-130J Commando II leads the heritage formation of three MC-130 variants off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 26, 2015. The 353rd Special Operations Group performed the unique formation to commemorate the arrival of the MC-130J Commando II, the retirement of the MC-130P Combat Shadow, and the continuing mission of the MC-130H Combat Talon II.

WHEN REVIEWING THE YEAR'S HAPPENINGS, Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold related that about three weeks after taking command of U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), he led an off-site meeting with the staff directors and subordinate commanders of the wings and groups. After three days, they emerged with a revised set of command priorities. He said these are the things AFSOC exists to do and they are the guides to all his decisions, including those decisions made each day concerning how to prioritize time and money. He asserted also that they guide his staff directors and all subordinate commands of AFSOC in just the same way. They are:

- Provide combat ready forces;
- Create an environment for airmen and families to thrive;

- Transform training to optimize human performance; and
- Modernize and sustain the force.

At nearly the same time, major events in the world were conspiring to have another major impact on AFSOC, probably the second-most significant event for the command in 2014. This was the emergence of the Islamic State terrorist group, usually referred to by its competing acronyms, ISIS or ISIL, which gained control of much of Syria and Iraq. Orders came quickly thereafter to provide increased deployments of combat-ready aircraft and Air Commandos to the Middle East. Until then, the command had been in the process of drawing down its forces involved in Afghanistan and had already withdrawn from Iraq. Now, in the middle of 2014, it was time to send some of them back.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

MISSION: SEIZE THE SPECTRUM

Staying a step ahead of emerging threats. Protecting warfighters. Improving survivability. It all starts with seizing control of the electromagnetic spectrum and using it to ensure mission success. Raytheon enables customers to do just that, with full-spectrum solutions that span a broad range of domains and capabilities.



Seize the spectrum with products like our Next Generation Jammer.

Raytheon.com/spectrum

Connect with us:      

Raytheon

Customer Success Is Our Mission



Flight control specialist journeymen from the 4th Aircraft Maintenance Unit (AMU) work on an AC-130U Spooky gunship at Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 16, 2014. The 4th AMU maintains the aircraft 24 hours a day to ensure that training missions go as planned.

The change from drawdown to buildup in forward-deployed combat locations coincided with the year of planned retirement of the first three AC-130Us, or U-model gunships, and several of the MC-130P aircraft used for mobility and to air refuel helicopters and CV-22s. The first aircraft that was to replace the U-model gunships, an AC-130J, had just arrived at AFSOC for modification but was years from combat-ready status. The MC-130Js will replace all the other MC-130 variants, a total of 57 aircraft including 14 Combat Talon Is, 24 Combat Talon IIs, and 23 Combat Shadows. The MC-130Js have been informally named the Commando II, and Heithold emphasized that “the requirement is for 94 total J-model aircraft, and it will not change,” even though the current program falls 15 MC-130J aircraft short. Adjustments made to comply with the Budget Control Act (known as sequestration) will fund only 79 J-models total, of which 37 will become AC-130J gunships and 42 will become MC-130Js.

The AFSOC change of command therefore occurred when the command found itself in a bit of a straddle, retiring legacy aircraft while bringing on new ones. The new commander reviewed those schedules of aircraft coming and going in light of his newly minted list of priorities. He found the schedules to be incompatible with his four priorities, and he’s ordered his staff to fix the incongruities.

He ordered a pause in the retirement schedule of the U-model gunships, stopping the retirement of those aircraft until the modification and testing of the replacement AC-130Js, which will include more work than originally planned. Instead of only trans-decking the Precision Strike Package (PSP) of the AC-130W, the new aircraft will have the PSP with full cockpit integration, vice federated installs, including into the pilot heads-up displays. It will also include a favorite of AC-130 ground customers – the 105 mm howitzer, which was previously being studied as a possible included capability. These adjustments will prevent, in the words of AFSOC Director of Operations (A3) Maj. Gen. Mark Hicks, “Deploying to combat with replacement aircraft that have less capability than those which we’re retiring.” Heithold explained that the adjusted program, involving three to four years of development time and corresponding delays in U-model retirements, will allow AFSOC to “get it right, not fast,” to maintain current capability while ensuring improvements to that capability in the replacement aircraft.



VALBIN CORPORATION

4800 Hampden Lane, Suite 320, Bethesda, MD 20814

Office: 301-986-8008 Email: Proposals@valbin.org

www.Valbin.org

With over a decade of experience, boundless performance capabilities, and proactive partnership approach, Valbin provides superior linguistic, analytical, and intelligence services for the diplomatic, defense and intelligence communities.

VALBIN offers its clients the power to succeed through: Language and Analytic Services, Role Players (Language Speaking and Civilians on Battlefield), Intelligence and Operations Support, Mission Readiness Support, Training and Education

Performance | Partnership | Excellence

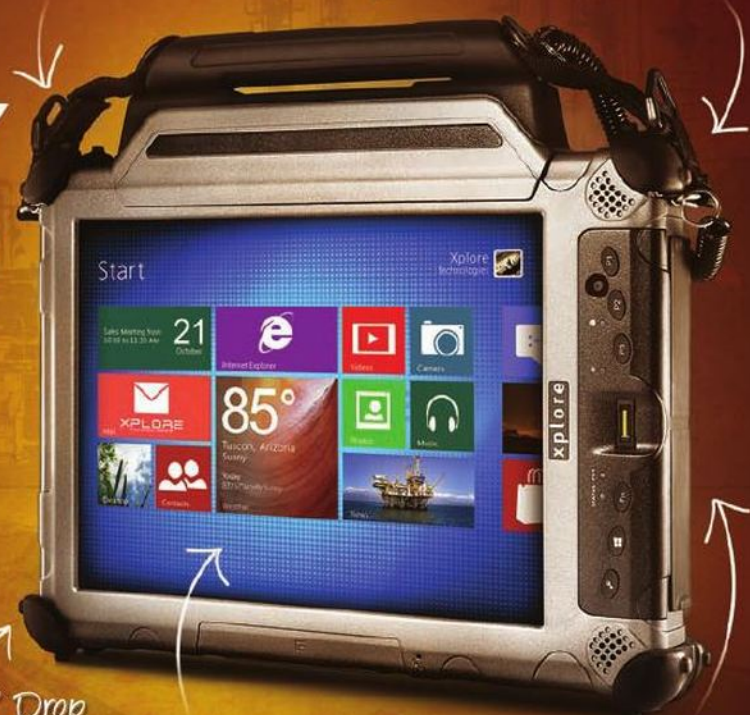
THE XC6 SERIES: ENGINEERED FOR THE ELEMENTS

The new XC6 series of tablets from Xplore Technologies feature the most rugged specs available, a 4th Gen Intel® i5 Core™, and the most advanced sunlight readable glove touch display on the market. You've never seen a tablet take on the elements like this before.

XPLORE
TECHNOLOGIES
www.xploretech.com

-30°F - 140°F Operating Temp

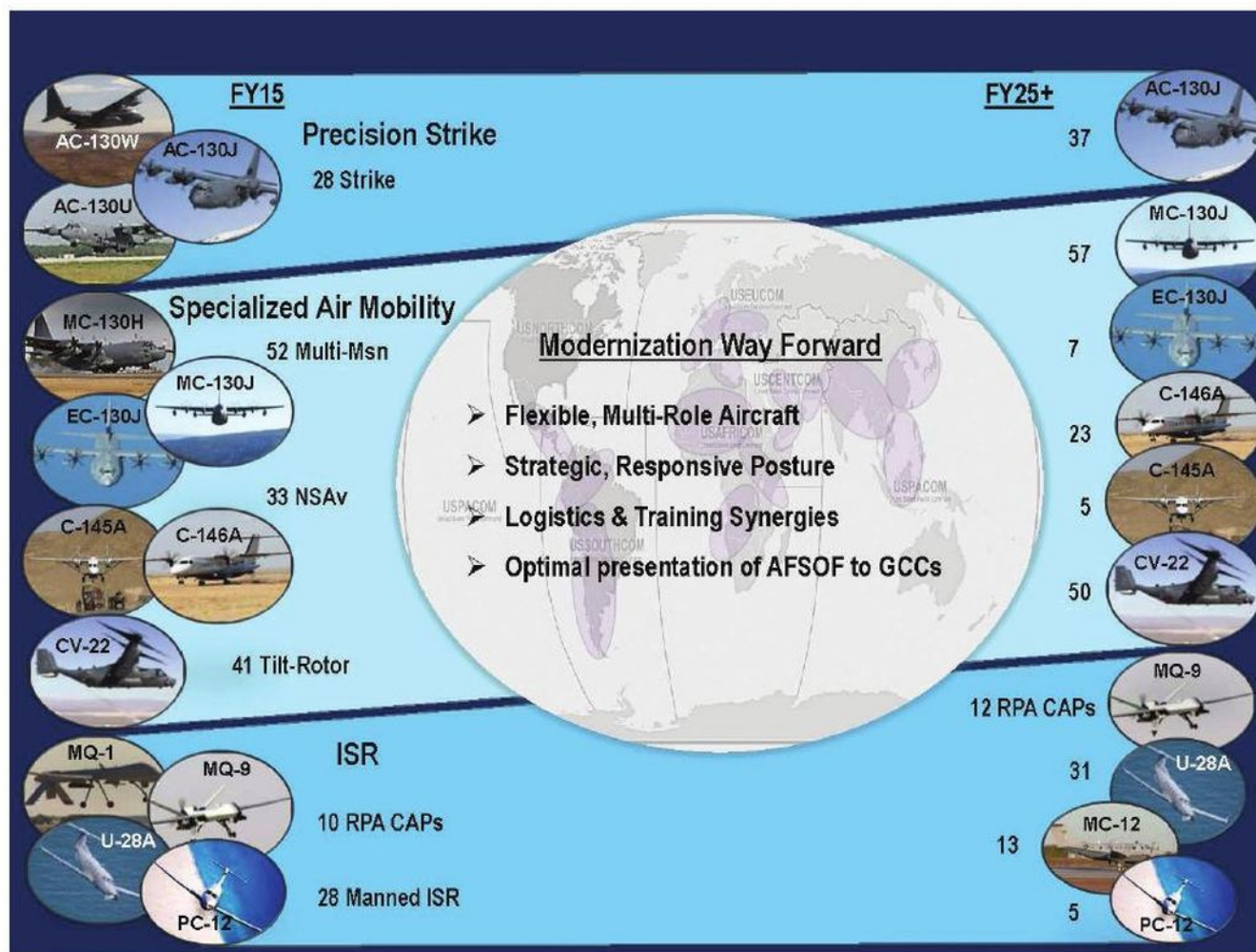
Water Proof



7' Drop

Direct Sunlight Readable

Dust Proof



This chart summarizes the adjustments to AFSOC's plans for its aircraft.

The Combat Talon II retirement plans were also affected by the commander's intention to get it right. It is Heithold's belief that "AFSOC exists to have the ability to penetrate enemy defenses for combat mobility – that means providing fully capable Commando IIs and CV-22s." Therefore, it is the commander's intention to keep the fully capable MC-130H Combat Talon IIs available until the Commando II reaches operational equivalency.

Additionally, similar delays will occur in the modernization and acquisition of the MC-130J Commando II aircraft. These aircraft are being delivered to AFSOC from the Lockheed-Martin production facility in Georgia and are equipped very similarly to those being delivered to Air Combat Command as helicopter tankers. The defensive systems and navigation capabilities are far less than those required for a threat area-penetrating special operations mission aircraft. AFSOC will therefore slow retirements of its best capability Combat Talon IIs until the Commando II achieves equal or better capabilities. This will also take up to three to five years, but will provide Commando IIs with an integrated and fully tested terrain-following/terrain-avoidance (TF/TA) radar and sufficient defensive systems.

Also, only 42 J-model aircraft are funded and planned to be in Commando II configuration in the current budgets, short of the number required in the Program

of Record. Heithold has decided that AFSOC will retain 15 of the Combat Talon IIs until they are replaced by aircraft of equal or greater capability.

These changes to accommodate both the newly ordered AFSOC priorities and the changing geopolitical landscape caused by ISIS do look like a difficult set of adjustments. In fact, they're significantly harder than they look. The final headache to account for in these changes is the funding required for additional people to populate the aircrew and maintenance needs of the AC-130U, AC-130J gunships, and the Combat Talon IIs and Commando IIs. Previous decisions made by AFSOC, Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and the U.S. Air Force (USAF), in adjusting to recent Department of Defense (DOD) budgetary pressures, scheduled retirements to coincide with deliveries. Now some of the aircraft being retired will continue to operate for years after the new aircraft are delivered. Paying for people to populate both at once will require significant adjustments in SOCOM funding of AFSOC personnel. As AFSOC's director of Strategic Plans, Programs and Requirements, Brig. Gen. Kirk Smith has the job of reconciling the schedule and the budgets with possible trades to make on programs and delivery dates. He said, "It won't be easy, but getting the money to pay for slowing retirements of legacy aircraft is just something we have to do."

Another big change has occurred in the plans for AFSOC's fleet of aircraft involved in manned aircraft ISR, (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance). Last year's plan to accept up to 38 MC-12 Project Liberty (two-engine) aircraft from Air Combat Command and to retire AFSOC's 28 (single-engine) U-28s is no longer current. SOCOM completed a congressionally mandated cost/benefit analysis of the plan and discovered that the \$1 billion dollar cost would result in only a marginal increase in capability. Deeming the swap not worth the cost, Heithold directed that AFSOC will keep its U-28s and asked only to fund modification of three of its lift-providing PC-12s to the U-28 configuration. Thirteen MC-12s will go to the Oklahoma Air National Guard in support of special operations missions. SOCOM and DOD haven't yet funded those three aircraft, according to Smith, but it would be a way to increase the availability of much needed ISR.

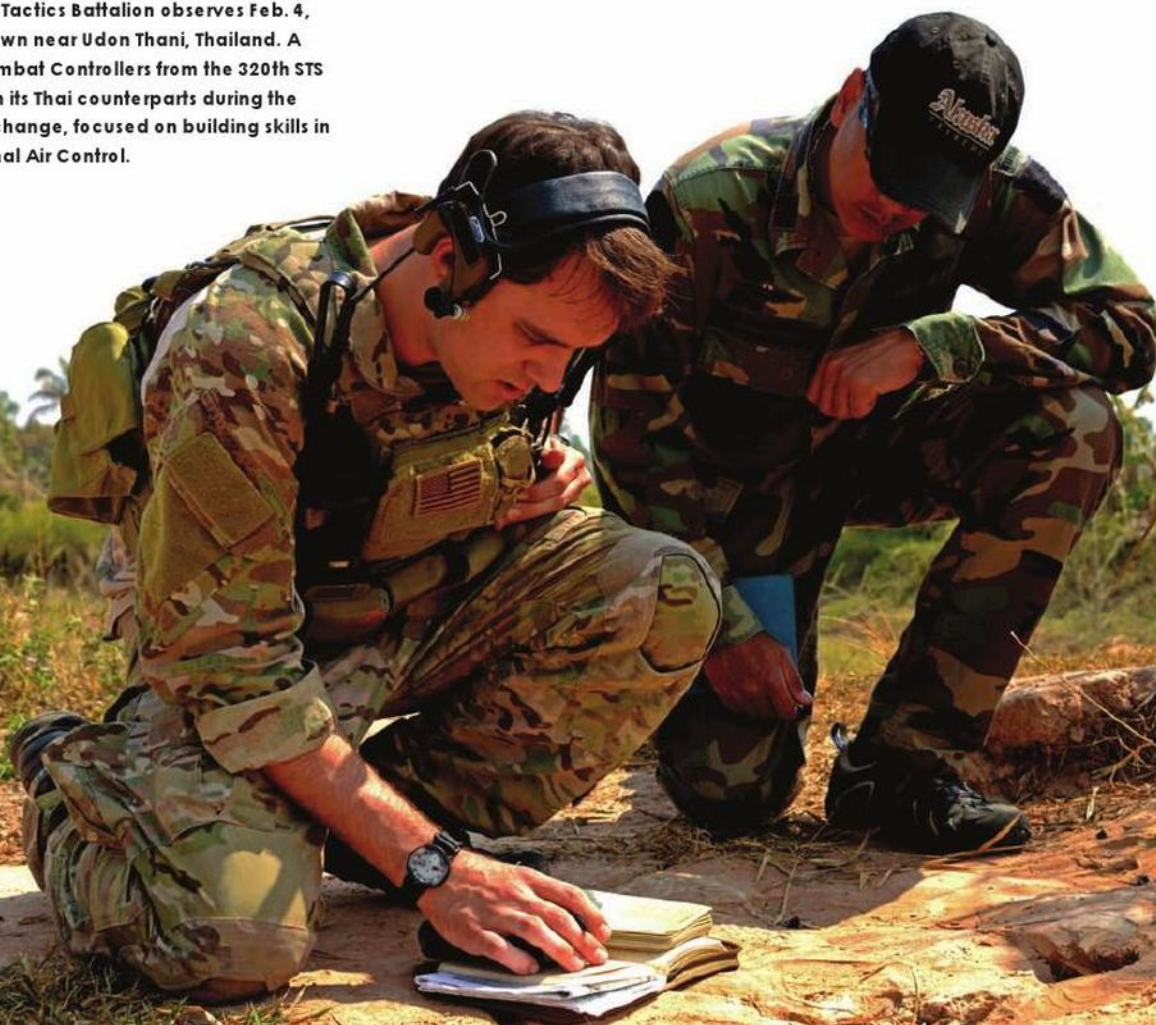
Missions: Resting Is Not on the List

AFSOC continues to adjust to missions that require fewer people and aircraft by finding that other missions

are waiting for people and aircraft to become available. Reductions in Afghanistan on the combat mobility front see increases in support of missions to train Afghan airmen and to provide additional support. The numbers of any of these missions in way of aircraft and people cannot be provided, but celebrations of groups of people returning from forward-deployed areas at Hurlburt Field, Florida; Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico; and locations where AFSOC's Special Tactics airmen are stationed continue at pretty much the same rate as always. Heithold has remarked that the "demand signal" on sending people and aircraft to forward areas is increasing. Additionally, he said that the maintenance people of the AC-130s prefer the aircraft return from their missions with little or no ammunition to unload and care for. "They're coming back every night empty."

Apparently, there's been no drawdown in people who need to be shot. There has also been no noticed decrease in AFSOC's warriors deserving decoration. The Special Tactics career field of Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen, Tactical Air Control Party, and Special Operations Weathermen continue to be the most decorated in AFSOC and in the USAF as a whole. In 2014, they amassed an impressive set of statistics in combat.

Staff Sgt. Zachary Asmus, a Combat Controller from the 320th Special Tactics Squadron (STS), demonstrates how to conduct urban close air support as a member of the Royal Thai Air Force 3rd Special Tactics Battalion observes Feb. 4, 2014, in a town near Udon Thani, Thailand. A team of Combat Controllers from the 320th STS worked with its Thai counterparts during the training exchange, focused on building skills in Joint Terminal Air Control.





U.S. Air Force Combat Controllers point to an incoming aircraft while standing on the back of a truck during Emerald Warrior 2014 at Stennis International Airport, Mississippi, May 2, 2014. Emerald Warrior is an annual joint exercise to train special operations, conventional, and partner-nation forces in combat scenarios designed to hone special operations air and ground combat skills, and is the Department of Defense's only irregular warfare exercise.

Mission Data from 2014

Special Tactics airmen were involved in:

- More than 3,000 combat missions
- More than 450 troops in contact (skirmishes/fights)
- More than 7,000 drop zone/landing zone (LZ)/helicopter LZ controls (coordinating aircraft to land or drop supplies)
- More than 10,900 close air support controls (calling in close air support)
- More than 100,000 pounds of precision ordnance dropped

They also merited a visit to Hurlburt Field by Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James in December to award the Air Force Cross to Pararescueman Master Sgt. Ivan Ruiz.

When requested to provide some representative mission narratives from AFSOC units, Hicks remarked that few

could be provided due to classification. Still, he provided a couple of things outside the usual and expected missions of gunships shooting, CV-22 and MC-130 combat mobility, or ISR – manned and unmanned – tracking targets for capture or destruction.

Two mission areas of training were spotlighted. One involves improving the knowledge and skills of AFSOC airmen and their abilities to integrate air capabilities from the larger Theater Air Component with the smaller Special Operations Air Component. The second is one in which AFSOC airmen provide training to allies who are often growing and developing initial and embryonic air capabilities for their own nations.

Since just before 9/11, AFSOC joined the regular Air Force in training “patch wearers,” or U.S. Air Force Weapons School graduates – experts in air combat and integrating all air capabilities on the battlefield. Known throughout the Air Force as the authorities on all things about air and space capabilities, the patch wearers from the USAF Weapons School take the lead in planning of the use of air capabilities in campaign planning. AFSOC needed its own patch wearers badly in order to be fully capable of integrating theater air capabilities in support of SOF missions. The 14th Weapons Squadron provided the following summary of its very eventful year in 2014:

A part of the USAF Weapons School, the 14th Weapons Squadron's mission is to teach graduate-level instructor

courses, which provide advanced training in weapons and tactics employment. The 14th graduated the largest number of Weapons Officers in squadron history (14) in 2014. These graduates are taking their expertise in SOF tactics and integration with the CAF (Combat Air Forces) and MAF (Mobility Air Forces) and providing their commanders with leaders and decision-makers who will better the command in the short term and long term.

To ensure AFSOC Weapons Officers are tactical and integration experts, the 14th Weapons Squadron secured nearly \$1 million in funds to renovate their building at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Coinciding with this, the 14th Weapons Squadron has moved its capstone training exercise, SOFEX, to Nellis. This exercise integrates SOF from all services as well as the CAF and MAF, giving students opportunities to integrate with other platforms and weapons systems while providing unparalleled leadership opportunities. In 2014, this exercise integrated 14 Weapons Instructor Courses, 50 aircraft, and 500 personnel.

Not only has the 14th Weapons Squadron graduated Weapons Officers for AFSOC in 2014, the squadron has also been at the forefront of tactics development and training for the command. SOFEX and Advanced Integration at Nellis has produced valuable lessons learned and after-action reports that will shape tactics and training development in AFSOC in the short term and long term. The unique training opportunities provided by the 14th at Nellis during these large force exercises have created discussion about how to better integrate AFSOC aircraft with the CAF and MAF in order to be successful during future military operations. Furthermore, these exercises have laid the groundwork for upgrades to legacy weapons systems as well as changes in tactics and training in order to better integrate in future conflicts.

Overall, 2014 was a banner year in the history of the 14th Weapons Squadron and AFSOC as a whole. The groundwork laid by the cadre and support staff at the 14th have shaped AFSOC priorities, tactics development, and training and will continue to do so in the future. More importantly, the 14th will continue to transform and inspire students, ultimately developing leaders for AFSOC who are tactical and integration experts, adhering to the SOF truth that "Humans are more important than hardware."

Special Tactics airmen from the 24th Special Operations Wing (SOW) jump out of an MC-130H Talon II at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Jan. 7, 2014. The airmen were from various Special Tactics career fields, including Special Operations Weathermen, Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen, and Tactical Air Control Parties. The 24th SOW's mission is to provide Special Tactics forces for rapid global employment to enable airpower success.

MASTER SGT. IVAN RUIZ, AIR FORCE CROSS RECIPIENT

Special Tactics Pararescueman, 23rd Special Tactics Squadron

A Pararescueman's (PJ) primary function is to perform personnel recovery operations and provide battlefield emergency medical care. A PJ's unique technical rescue skill sets are utilized during humanitarian and combat operations; they deploy anywhere, anytime, with air-sea-land tactics into restricted environments to authenticate, extract, treat, stabilize, and evacuate injured or isolated personnel.

Their motto, "That Others May Live," reaffirms the Pararescueman's commitment to saving lives. Without PJs, thousands of service members and civilians would have been unnecessarily lost in past conflicts and natural disasters. On Dec. 10, 2013, Master Sgt. Ivan M. Ruiz, a Pararescueman, was attached as the lone rescue specialist to an Army Special Forces team assaulting a Taliban stronghold. The team inserted into the Mushan village area in no-visibility conditions due to the CH-47 Chinooks creating a dust





U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO

and sand cloud at the insertion point. Despite this, Ruiz quickly gathered his element of Afghan commandos and moved rapidly to the objective. While they moved, an orbiting flight of AH-64 Apache helicopters observed armed

insurgents maneuvering into attack positions, and began engaging with 30 mm cannon fire.

With the element of surprise lost, Ruiz followed his Afghan clearing element into the courtyard of a target compound and breached the main building. Four inhabitants emerged, appearing to surrender. Without warning, the surrendering insurgents drew weapons and began firing. Four U.S. service members and 10 Afghan commandos engaged in a point-blank firefight, which ended with the elimination of all four insurgents.

Gathering in the courtyard, Ruiz and two U.S. team members faced two small mud huts. Ruiz focused on one hut, while his teammates oriented on the other. Instantly, an armed insurgent filled the doorway of one hut 20 meters away. Ruiz instinctively fired his rifle, neutralizing the enemy fighter. Simultaneously, a barrage of machine gun fire erupted from the second hut, wounding the two team members near Ruiz. Ruiz laid down cover fire in an attempt to move closer to his fallen comrades, but he was unable to advance against the high volume of enemy fire. He shouted for reinforcement, but the Afghan commandos were trapped behind cover. Disregarding his own safety, Ruiz crossed the open courtyard toward his wounded team members.

Without assistance, he engaged enemy forces who blasted machine gun fire at him across the compound. Ruiz continued to suppress the enemy fighters with his own fire until finally joined by a U.S. team member. When his team member threw a grenade into the hut, he seized the advantage and closed the distance to his wounded comrades. Seconds later, insurgents in the hut responded with two grenades of their own. Prone and unable to maneuver, Ruiz was saved by an unpulled pin as the first grenade landed within feet of him while the other grenade detonated a few meters away.

Ruiz pressed through intense fire to reach the two wounded soldiers and drag them to relative safety. Ruiz then treated his wounded team members and packaged them for transport on an incoming helicopter. Rejoining his assault team, Ruiz treated three commandos wounded by grenade shrapnel, and continued to clear enemy compounds until the operation ended.

Ruiz's actions saved the lives of two U.S. team members and contributed to the death of 11 enemy fighters. Ruiz received the Air Force Cross medal for his heroic actions against an armed enemy of the United States.

— U.S. Air Force

Consider also a mission that is becoming the focus and main effort in many parts of the world, that of Building Partner Capacity and Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) performed by Combat Aviation Advisors (CAAs). This mission is one of providing training and advice to partner air forces, enabling them to take over the Direct-Action missions needed to fight the worldwide spread of violent extremist networks using terrorist tactics to achieve political results. Col. Dave Tabor, commander of the Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center, provided the following summary of the missions of the CAAs:

Calendar year 2014 panned out to be an active and transformative year for AFSOC's CAA community. Active-duty and Reserve CAAs from the Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center (AFSOAWC) were engaged in partnered SOF operations in the CENTCOM, AFRICOM, PACOM, and SOUTHCOM areas of responsibility.

In Afghanistan, CAAs alongside joint and combined SOF counterparts introduced and integrated fixed-wing capabilities that continue to revolutionize how Afghan special operations forces fight. Armed with the right authorities, CAAs accompanied and integrated their

Afghan counterparts on more than 80 combat operations totaling in excess of 2,000 flight hours. Due to the benefits of a persistent presence, CAAs saw Afghan skill and buy-in grow to the eventual ends of legitimate integrated SOF capabilities for Afghanistan. As a result of their combat effectiveness, partnered U.S./Afghan crews have been decorated on numerous occasions by the U.S. and Afghan governments. AFSOAWC experiences in Afghanistan point to the critical role that persistence, authorities, and joint/interagency approaches play in determining the success of Aviation Foreign Internal Defense efforts.

Overall, AFSOC in 2014 received new leadership and direction as well as a new war against a new and developing enemy, and worked to provide itself with extremely capable aircraft with new capabilities. It's engaged around the world with people who are able to place the most advanced air power in the service of missions at the highest level of the combat spectrum, while also helping to grow the air power capabilities of our allies. Truly, the air component of U.S. Special Operations Command is ready now, fighting the nation's wars, building its future in equipment and people, and continually improving itself all along the way. ■

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/SENIOR AIRMAN CHRISTOPHER CALLAWAY

Today Will Be Different

By J.R. Wilson

THE MOTTO OF MARINE CORPS FORCES Special Operations Command (MARSOC) – “Today will be different” – could not have been more accurate during the command’s ninth year as the Marine Corps component of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). From a change of name for the members to Marine Raiders to the worst single day loss of life in its history to trying to balance the withdrawal from Afghanistan with new demands in Iraq, Africa, Europe, and elsewhere around the globe – all while in the midst of an ever-tightening Department of Defense (DOD) budget that has placed some needed new equipment programs in jeopardy – it has been a tumultuous period for the Raiders and their new commander.

Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Osterman took over as MARSOC’s fifth commanding general on Aug. 6, 2014, and immediately faced the problems of an increasing level of command responsibilities within SOCOM and increasing demands for the use of his smaller-than-originally envisioned force of 2,742 Marines and sailors – what his predecessor, Maj. Gen. Mark A. Clark, USMC (Ret.), called “right-sizing” in light of budget restrictions.

At the same time, MARSOC was expanding its relationship with the big Corps, SOCOM, and the joint force Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs).

“Until 2015, MARSOC’s primary focus was support of operations in Afghanistan. MARSOC has now operationally re-oriented in order to better support the GCCs in the post-OEF environment. MARSOC’s forces are now regionally focused in order to provide persistently forward deployed, reinforced Marine Special Operations Companies [MSOC (Rein)] to U.S. Central Command [CENTCOM], U.S. Pacific Command [PACOM], and U.S. Africa Command [AFRICOM],” Osterman said.

“The MARSOC training continuum produces task-organized MSOCs capable of full spectrum special operations with particular emphasis on skills related to partner-nation capacity building. The three battalions of the MSOR [Marine Special Operations Regiment] and MSOSG [Marine Special Operations Support Group] have regionally oriented to effectively produce this capability in support of these commands. In addition, each forward-deployed MSOC (Rein) is also attuned to the unique regional requirements of their deployment area, including language capability and any specific regional tactical capabilities.”



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN EVERETT ALLEN

Marine special operations forces prepare for a mission during a training exercise aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73). SEALs and Marine Special Operations (MARSOC) forces from Special Operations Command Pacific conducted maritime interoperability training aboard USS George Washington. George Washington and its embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, provide a combat-ready force that protects and defends the collective maritime interests of the United States and its allies and partners in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.



MARSOC's role within SOCOM includes providing operational forces trained in:

- Direct Action (DA);
- Special Reconnaissance (SR);
- Security Force Assistance (SFA);
- Counterinsurgency (COIN);
- Foreign Internal Defense (FID); and
- Counterterrorism (CT).

The command also is tasked to provide support to civil affairs operations, military information support

operations, foreign humanitarian assistance, unconventional warfare, and countering of weapons of mass destruction operations, as well as training, equipping, planning for, and providing forces to execute special operations forces (SOF) command and control.

"Finally, MARSOC is tasked to explore the interdependence, interoperability, and integration of special operations forces and conventional forces, both during planning and on the battlefield and specifically as it relates to crisis response," Osterman added.

At CTC, Technology and Innovation are
Concurrent.



- Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing
- Education & Training
- Energy & Environment
- Environment, Safety & Occupational Health
- Information Technology Solutions
- Intelligence Solutions
- Logistics
- Special Missions

2015 **WORLD'S MOST
ETHICAL
COMPANIES™**
WWW.ETHISPHERE.COM



*Concurrent
Technologies
Corporation*

www.ctc.com



LEFT: A Multi-Purpose Canine (MPC) handler with MARSOC carries his canine up a grated ladderwell during training aboard Stone Bay Rifle Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Sept. 16, 2014. As MARSOC continues to demonstrate its capabilities and versatility, MPC handlers with the command are preparing themselves and their canines for operations in new areas of responsibility.

ABOVE: Marines build their strength in the water during a water physical training session of Phase I of the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command's Assessment and Selection course aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Jan. 30, 2015. Marines must successfully complete several qualifications with varying criteria during the course.

While details of unit deployments are not made public, the Raiders will be spread across the three GCC regions, with a focus on training and coordination with friendly governments dealing with insurgents and terrorists. In this new alignment, one MARSOC battalion is assigned to support each related geographic SOCOM element – SOCPAC (SOCOM-Pacific), SOCAF (SOCOM-Africa), and SOCCENT (SOCOM-Central).

Osterman described the deployments as more proactive, to help develop host-nation forces' capability to prevent conflict, rather than reactive crisis management. Whether that will include working with Iraqi forces combating Islamic State militants who have seized a large part of Iraq in recent months remains unknown.

The new areas of operation (AOs) into which Raiders are being deployed also are creating new and expanded training and capabilities to deal with environments, cultures, and threats far removed from the landlocked deserts and mountains of Afghanistan.

One of those was creation of a SOF Liaison Element (SOFLE) – a six-man team headed by a lieutenant colonel – as an at-sea component working with the East and West Coast Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) afloat.

The SOFLEs will only deploy “as needed” for exercises or crisis response, giving the MEU commander a direct tie into the SOF network without actually returning to the original concept of placing full MARSOC teams on ships as part of the pivot to Asia.

“MARSOC participates in the SOCOM ARG [Amphibious Ready Group]/MEU SOFLE program in conjunction with the other SOCOM components. This SOCOM program has been very successful to date and we expect that success to continue,” Osterman said. “There are no plans to assign operational MARSOC capabilities/units to MEUs.”

Another MARSOC component undergoing expansion is the Multi-Purpose Canine (MPC) unit.

“Now that MARSOC has broken down into different AOs, we’re ensuring all the handlers know what AO they’re going into and what mission set the teams could be tasked with,” according to MPC’s program manager. “All of our guys have all the same capabilities, but each handler will be dealing with a different mission set in respect to his AO, so we’re constantly training and re-certifying our guys to create a great product for the teams.”

Core MPC capabilities include traditional military canine duties, such as explosives detection and intruder alert, but those are being constantly upgraded with feedback from handlers returning from deployment. That leads to additional training to provide both handlers and canines with special skills required to meet the needs of the Marine Special Operations Teams (MSOTs) to which they are assigned.

It also includes a new emphasis on maritime operations.

“That’s what we bring to MARSOC with our multi-purpose canines – a dog with several different capabilities to be able to conduct whatever mission the team has for us,” the MPC



A U.S. Marine Critical Skills Operator with 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, MARSOC, releases his ruck sack from his body, preparing to land during a double-bag static line (DBSL) parachute training course, Aug. 26, 2014, in rural Arizona. The DBSL course was an introduction to the High Altitude, High Opening (HAHO) insertion method utilized by special operations forces.

program manager explained. “They’re getting a multi-purpose canine that’s off leash, sniffing out explosives; they can track, patrol, chase down fleeing suspects, and provide an extra layer of protection to the team.”

Despite the low cap on authorized force size, MARSOC continues to look across the big Corps for future new Raiders.

“Our recruiting goals and priorities in the next year or two include informing and educating the force and preparing those Marines selected to attend assessment and selection [A&S]. We continue to build the force by using the best practices in recruiting and screening in which to assign qualified Marines for the Critical Skills Operator [CSO/Special Operations Officer [SOO] pipeline program. Our community does not strive for minimums. We continue to look for those individuals who want to continue serving their Corps and nation beyond the tip of the spear,” Osterman said.

“We will inform the force with the assistance of Headquarters Marine Corps and the support of the Fleet Marine Force units to ensure all available information is communicated to those qualified and interested Marines. We will strive to inform those Marines of every opportunity to take the challenge to enter the CSO/SOO and the Special Operations Capabilities Specialist [SOCS] arena.”

Despite being sent into some of the most dangerous combat situations facing the U.S. military, MARSOC experienced its worst single-day loss of life in a training accident on March 10, 2015, when an Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter carrying seven Raiders and four Louisiana National Guardsmen crashed in heavy fog during a water insertion exercise off the coast of the Florida Panhandle. All aboard perished.

“Any loss of a Marine is a tragedy and so [the accident] is really not one I could put in context or scope,” Osterman stated during a press conference at the time. “In this case, to have such a tremendous group of Marines, obviously the experience they had and the cohesion and teamwork and everything else that they exhibited, it definitely hit us all hard – and by having that many all at one time.”

All seven Marines were members of the 2nd Raiders Special Operations Battalion at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

SOCOM and its four service components were among the least directly affected by recent budget cuts, although the across-the-board impact of sequestration was felt. That reflects the growing view of SOF as one of the most important military capabilities to combat unexpected hostile events anywhere in the world.

“To date, unlike the conventional forces, budget constraints have had marginal impacts on MARSOC’s equipment acquisitions, maintenance, and training. In FY 16, expectations are that the impacts will become significant if the spending caps established in the 2011 Budget Control Act for FY 16 are enforced (not adjusted or repealed). From a G-3 perspective, there has been no impact. We are successfully accomplishing all our assigned tasks effectively and efficiently,” Osterman said.

Nonetheless, all of the service chiefs, DOD civilian leadership, and SOCOM’s commander, Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel, in testimony before the House and Senate Armed Services Committees’ DOD budget hearings in March, voiced strong concerns about tight budgets – and especially a return of sequestration – causing both SOF and regular forces to fall below critical capability levels.



ABOVE: Two Critical Skills Operators with 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion prepare to go below deck while clearing a yacht during a visit, board, search, and seizure exercise, Feb. 21, 2015, in Key West, Florida. The operators' team spent a week in Key West practicing various maritime operations skill sets, further solidifying the development of their techniques, tactics, and procedures.

RIGHT: U.S. Marine Corps operators with 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion (3D MSOB), U.S. Special Operations Command, conduct low-level static line parachute jumps at Bridgeport, California, Oct. 16, 2014. 3D MSOB Marines stayed at Bridgeport to attend the assault climbers course and the special operations forces horsemanship course.



Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict Michael D. Lumpkin told lawmakers it is vital to the nation's security to maintain SOF that are globally postured to support the COCOMs in handling the rapidly changing threats the United States and its allies face. And sequestration, if it returns to the budget process in FY 16, poses a major threat to that effort.

"From ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] to pro-Russian rebel forces in Ukraine, the United States and our international partners face a diverse set of unconventional threats worldwide centered within the physical terrain, the human domain, information environment, and financial cyberspace," he said.

"Additionally, our response efforts often require security force assistance missions in non-permissive and politically sensitive areas where the host nation demands a discreet U.S. footprint.

"Protection and preservation of SOF is of utmost importance. Our people are the foundation of special operations and we strive to ensure our force and their families have a support system necessary to ensure their long-term prosperity and health. We seek to ensure the physical and mental resilience of the individuals who make up our force. Continual combat deployments, combined with the demanding training regimen needed to keep the force sharp, have caused stress on the force and with their families."

Votel echoed Lumpkin's concerns.

"Alongside our conventional force partners, the 69,000 quiet professionals of SOCOM are committed to values-based excellence and service to our nation. They relentlessly pursue mission success and, today, roughly 7,500 of them are deployed to more than 80 countries worldwide supporting geographic combatant commander requirements and named operations," he testified. "These requirements span the range of our core activities.

"From working with indigenous forces and local governments to improve local security to high-risk counterterrorism operations, SOF are in vital roles performing essential tasks. They provide critical linkages to our security partners and must be prepared to handle a wide range of contingencies, despite a small footprint in their areas of responsibility. These missions are often complicated, demanding and high risk. Because of the unique skill set SOF possess, we are seeing increasing demand for these units across the [COCOMs].

"Non-state actors like al Qaeda and ISIL and other violent extremist organizations, menacing state actors like North Korea, and growingly coercive actors like Russia are just a few examples of the entities affecting the strategic environment [in] which we operate. I remain profoundly concerned by the impact of another round of sequestration and how it not only impacts SOCOM but, more importantly, how it will affect the four services, upon whom we are absolutely dependent for mission support."



GOLIGHT

Revolutionary Lighting Solutions by Golight Inc



Durable... Versatile... Powerful... ..GUARANTEED!



Timepieces designed for high performance and high class from downrange to downtown.

This modest company is a labor of love for its founder, R.E. Smith and even welds his name. Founded in 2009, RESCO Instruments aspired to build a sleek, simple and rugged timepiece. This vision was realized with the production of the Gen1 "Patriot" model, which now graces the wrists of over 100 active duty US Navy SEALs including Resco's founder, R.E. Smith who is still in active service as a US Navy SEAL. The Gen1 Patriot line is the only watch that has been field tested through every phase of NSW training by actual operators who provided feedback and design input. We pride ourselves on being an American brand. All of our watches are designed, assembled and tested in Coronado USA and bear the name of our hometown on the base of the dial. Current RESCO Collections include our Gen1 Re-release, Gen2 Patriot, GMT Red Circle, BlackFrog, Manus Chronograph, Hooper and BullFrog Collection.

Visit our website to learn more today
www.RescoInstruments.com



To all those who have gone downrange, we salute you!



Critical Skills Operators with Bravo Company, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, MARSOC, saw through a steel door during visit, board, search, and seizure training near Naval Base Coronado, California.

MARSOC has no budget for research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) nor independent acquisition, relying on SOCOM, the big Corps, the Navy, and the Army for efforts such as replacing the heavy MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles designed to meet an urgent anti-IED requirement in Iraq and Afghanistan with lighter armored vehicles more easily deployed by ship and helicopter. And while the most advanced – and portable – weapons, communications, and personal armor available are important, the key to MARSOC's mission is the individual Raider and extensive training in language, culture, negotiation, and training host-nation forces as well as being able to bring precision lethality to bear when and where needed with little advance notice or preparation.

A high point for MARSOC came in August 2014 with official authorization to use "Marine Raiders" to designate individual MARSOC special operators and below-headquarters commands. The name commemorates the four short-lived, but historically renowned, Marine Raider battalions and two Raider regiments formed to conduct amphibious raids and guerrilla operations behind enemy lines in the Pacific Theater between 1942 and 1944. Many military historians see the Raiders as America's first special operations units.

Although MARSOC did not officially adopt the name when it was formed in 2006, it had been in use unofficially throughout the command's brief history. In one of his final acts as commandant, Gen. James F. Amos made the title official in a proclamation he released Aug. 6, 2014, calling for "the official continuation of our Corps' special operations heritage from the Raiders of World War II to our modern day Marines."

"United States Marines take great pride in our special operations and irregular warfare heritage. From this point forward, the Marines of MARSOC will be officially aligned with the Marine Raiders of World War II and are charged with maintaining the high standards and traditions that accompany such distinction," Amos said during the MARSOC change-of-command ceremony in which Osterman replaced Clark.

The command headquarters retains the official name MARSOC, but all major subordinate elements have

been reflagged with the Raider name – Marine Raider Regiment, Marine Raider Support Group, Marine Raider Battalion, etc.

"It helps tell our story that the Marine Corps is not necessarily new to the world of special operations. This decision will enhance our esprit de corps and anchor MARSOC's identity and heritage with the Marine Corps," Osterman said. "The label 'Raider' will unify the three MARSOC battalions. Using the legacy of Marine Raiders and the label as an organization would create an umbrella in which all MOSs [Military Occupational Specialty] would fall. This unifying concept allows those who are 'operators' and those specialists who 'support' operations a common cohesive term as any other unit or MAGTF [Marine Air-Ground Task Force] would have.

"Marines are Marines; no one MOS or occupational field is more special than another. Each Marine brings a unique set of skills that is essential for the collective capability. It is this collective capability that is MARSOC's center of gravity and distinguishes MARSOC within SOF. Marine Raider ties together 'Marine' (who we are), with our historical heritage and to the type of activities (special operations) that we do, ultimately relaying the message 'Marines are who we are, special operations is what we do.' The official name changes were implemented and synchronized with the service's publishing of the February 2015 'Authorized Staffing Report.'"

As MARSOC and the rest of the U.S. military try to adjust to a constantly changing global environment, Osterman said the command would continue to develop capabilities rapidly, based on the operational demands of the GCCs and Theater Special Operations Commands [TSOCs].

"MARSOC is striving to maintain the leading edge on leveraging emerging technologies that provide our forces a comparative advantage against enemy networks globally. The integrated, cross-functional manner in which we train our forces ensures that we continue to innovate, experiment, and adapt operational and tactical concepts to ensure theater SOF forces remain capable of staying ahead of and influencing emerging enemies and assisting partners globally to defeat those threats to security and stability," Osterman said. ■

Naval Special Warfare in an Uncertain Global Security Environment

A Global Security Environment That Calls for Special Operations Forces

By Rear Adm. Brian Losey, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command



WE LIVE IN A RAPIDLY changing world full of uncertain security situations. Adversaries are capitalizing on a flattened global system that enables both state and non-state actors to exert destabilizing power and influence in a variety of non-traditional ways. Amidst these disruptions, governments are finding it harder and harder to maintain legitimacy with

disaffected populations and are challenged to adequately address the underlying grievances and root causes that are driving instability. It is in these seams where governments are most vulnerable, and where adversaries are exploiting their asymmetric advantage to gain an unconventional foothold and advance their objectives.

U.S. special operations forces (SOF) are uniquely suited to deliver significant impact in these very environments, aligned along three principal lines of effort: persistent engagement, enabling partners, and discreet action. SOF is quietly engaged in strategically important locations and integrated with a network of global and regional partners. These relationships form a cornerstone to build shared capability and capacity to meet common security threats. Long-term solutions or effective mitigation of security challenges lie in whole-of-government (or governments) solutions. SOF can play a supporting or supported role to conventional forces in a military operation, and has served as a key partner in coordination of

interagency efforts covered by governmental departments and agencies. SOF plays an important but not always decisive role in producing outcomes. SOF has the ability to conduct both discrete and discreet action against our most immediate threats. While working toward long-term security and stability objectives, SOF continues to be ready to mount effective crisis response and maintains a robust engagement program. These lines of effort are fundamental to meeting the broadening variety of security problems, and remain essential to building lasting stability and security needed to safeguard U.S. interests.

Naval Special Warfare's Role in SOF's Global Network

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) is the Navy component of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and the SOF component of the U.S. Navy. NSW is a full-spectrum special operations force with primacy in the maritime domain.

The mission of Naval Special Warfare Command is to man, train, equip, deploy, and sustain NSW forces for operations and activities worldwide, in support of Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) and the Combatant Commanders. NSW carries out that mission with a team of highly skilled and experienced professionals, totaling approximately 10,000 personnel – 3,600 active-duty SEALs and Special Boat Operators, 4,500 functional specialists sourced from the fleet, 1,200 civilians, and 750 Navy Reserve personnel.



Naval Special Warfare personnel conduct parachute training, one skill that enables them to insert into a variety of operational environments. U.S. Navy SEALs are a full-spectrum special operations force, with primacy in the maritime domain.

Protecting the people who protect others

Dräger



Maximum protection for maximum performance.

In an increasingly unsafe world, protecting the people who protect others has never been more critical. For more than 100 years, Dräger has focused on one goal: human safety. By working closely with military and civil forces, government agencies, and emergency services, we have learned about the dangers you face daily. Using state-of-the-art technology, we develop products based on your special requirements. Dräger solutions include respiratory protection systems, chemical protection clothing, portable gas detectors and monitors, thermal imaging cameras, diving equipment, and NBC/CBRNe protection/detection systems – all backed by service and support points worldwide.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.DRAEGER.COM/CBRNEWORLD

Dräger. Technology for Life®



U.S. Navy SEALs engage with local Afghans while conducting a sensitive site exploitation mission in the Jaji Mountains of eastern Afghanistan, Feb. 12, 2002. Establishing relationships, building trust, and helping to develop capabilities among U.S. partner nations is crucial to addressing security threats and working toward long-term stability.

Naval Special Warfare's top priorities are People, Mission, and Resources – each critical to meeting the operational requirements of Combatant Commanders today and to prepare to meet the evolving and uncertain challenges of tomorrow.

NSW's Flagship Weapons System

The No. 1 SOF truth is "Humans are more important than Hardware"; in Naval Special Warfare, our People are the capital resource and flagship weapons system. We develop, deploy, and sustain human systems that train and operate in highly dynamic, complex, and ambiguous environments.

The last 14 years of war have forged our force, through a cascade of challenging combat deployments and equally demanding training regimens. NSW has been a key SOF component in two landlocked wars and multiple areas of operation mired in conflict and turmoil. NSW has been a part of radically evolving counterinsurgency (COIN), combating terrorism (CT), and countering violent extremist organization (CVEO) approaches. At the same time, NSW has kept its fins in the water and in an equally radical manner, advanced the craft of maritime special

operations. Perhaps NSW's most radical advance is in the recognition and establishment of community-wide programs and practices that provide the essential care and support to ensure that our flagship weapons systems are mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically prepared to carry out critical, sensitive, and sometimes high-risk missions for the long term. Further, this support is extended to NSW Families to ensure resiliency on the home front. Every system, especially human systems, requires preventive maintenance and support.

Over time, NSW has evolved personnel assessment and selection processes beyond the requisite physical prowess dimension to place a premium on character, values-based critical thinking, and fast-twitch adaptability to a wide

range of operating environments and situations. These traits are necessary for small groups operating in sensitive environments, interacting directly with coalition and regional military partners as well as representatives from many departments and agencies of the U.S. and foreign governments. Additionally, NSW has taken on cutting-edge methodologies to implement a Continuum of Leadership Development, and is advancing training and teaching practices to find the highest degree of effectiveness in learning and retention of a broad range of required skills.

As part of our Human Capital Enterprise, we carefully manage professional education, career progression, and assignment. Thirty percent of NSW enlisted operators (SEALs and Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewmen, or SWCCs) are coming into the force with four-year degrees. This demographic shift offers NSW a tremendous opportunity to build the most capable warriors with cultural and language expertise as well as the intellectual savvy to effectively shape operating environments to reinforce security and stability. At the same time, the force trains for the worst case, and retains the lethality necessary for transition to crisis response, contingency response, and theater combat operations.

Hand in hand with NSW's emphasis on People is the recognition that in SOF business, the quantum leaps in advancing tactics, techniques, procedures, and hardware



that ensure mission success in complex and dynamic operating environments spring from the innovation and empowerment of our relatively junior members doing the Mission. NSW's training, trust, and empowerment of our tactical operators and enabling support personnel has proven to be well founded in consistently producing desired mission effects.

Total Commitment to Mission Effectiveness

On any given day, NSW is deployed to more than 35 countries around the world in a wide variety of operational environments and situations. Through persistent (vice episodic) engagement, forward deployed NSW builds

while broadly centered on building and enabling partner security capacity through a variety of programs and mechanisms regulated by the Department of Defense and the State Department, also integrate humanitarian efforts that win trust and confidence with the local civil populations that are exposed to the influences of violent extremism – a critical center of gravity. These partnership engagements are conditional and almost always operate in parallel with other governmental initiatives to advance democracy, free and fair elections, human rights, good governance, and education. This is a complex environment to operate in – more complex than the recognized SOF kinetic roles centered around Direct Action missions. Success in this environment hinges on our ability to engage with Ambassadors and their country teams, with host nation and regional military counterparts and with local

NSW's training, trust, and empowerment of our tactical operators and enabling support personnel has proven to be well founded in consistently producing desired mission effects.

trusted relationships and interoperability with partner nations. These efforts are closely coordinated with other government agencies, and are designed to support the Geographic Combatant Commander, Theater Special Operations Commander, and the Ambassador's requirements and objectives, tailoring solutions to theater problem sets and accomplishing mutual regional security objectives.

The NSW operational approach focuses on gaining access, placement, and influence in key operational environments in order to generate trust, confidence, and long-term working relationships. These partnerships,

civil populations. NSW needs and has the top quality people necessary to be effective in this endeavor.

Naval Special Warfare Groups are Echelon 3 major command organizations. NSW Groups man, train, equip, and certify for deployment all deployable NSW organizations, to include SEAL Teams, Special Boat Detachments, SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV – combatant submersible) Task Units, Cross Functional Teams, and other task organized elements. NSW Group Commanders and their staffs routinely interact with Theater Special Operations Commanders to define mission requirements and



objectives, with the aim of providing more than just forces, but tailored solutions to theater problem sets. In addition to serving as the nucleus from which deployable battle staffs like Combined Joint Special Operations Task Forces or Naval Special Warfare Task Groups are formed, NSW Groups reinforce the theater-based Naval Special Warfare Units that serve as the Navy component to Theater Special Operations Commands, and serve as the NSW center of gravity for theater command, control, and coherent component planning and execution. This evolution of NSW staff and battle staff functions allows NSW to achieve the critical mass required to support the many planning and execution tasks to support Theater Special Operations Commands within current manning and resourcing constraints.

NSW actively works to advance maritime interoperability and integration with the Navy in ways that best support our revised Maritime Strategy, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready,” as well as key operating concepts like the “Air and Sea Battle Concept.” As a part of the Navy, NSW has an innate orientation to leverage advanced technology, and finds incredible support and enablement from fleet-sourced Sailors with critical technical ratings. These Sailors comprise 56 percent of the NSW force and give as much back to the fleet as they bring to NSW after their special operations tours.

Resourcing Efficiently

USSOCOM shares resource sponsorship of NSW with the U.S. Navy. While NSW represents a comparatively small portion of the Navy budget, we fit well in “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready.” NSW operates forward as a core tenet, well-positioned in both the maritime and human domains to generate and preserve global maritime access. NSW stays deeply engaged with foreign Navy and SOF counterparts as a cornerstone of our operational approach, networking

FAR LEFT: Naval Special Warfare personnel participate in an international maritime training evolution. NSW is a full-spectrum force that successfully operates in sea, air, and land environments – with primacy in the maritime domain.

CENTER: West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare personnel conduct a visit, board, search, and seizure evolution during a maritime training exercise.

ABOVE: West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare personnel participate in an over-the-beach evolution during a maritime training exercise.

with partners to generate and maintain a level of readiness to respond to a range of crises quickly and effectively. Ensuring both SOF-unique and service-unique requirements are aligned and complementary to operational requirements is the coin of the realm in NSW resourcing.

Surface platforms, subsurface platforms, sea basing, and host platforms are required for NSW to operate in the full range of physical and political environments in the maritime domain. The development and fielding of these advanced platforms as well as adaption of host platforms must account for a range of mobility and access requirements, with signatures and capabilities suitable to anticipated operating environments. NSW’s SEAL/SDV operators and Combatant Craft Crewmen receive in-depth training and certification to operate these platforms worldwide. The Navy has steadily advanced fleet interoperability training to ensure NSW forces can embark in and operate from Navy ships and submarines with maximum effectiveness in support of ongoing operations and where crises and contingencies emerge. By advancing interoperability with the fleet, the force benefits from enhanced operational flexibility and responsiveness while reinforcing the Secretary of Defense’s emphasis on efficiency.

Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities are vital to enhancing awareness and understanding of operational environments and to synergizing partner capacity and capability development. NSW airborne ISR utilizes comparatively inexpensive tactical systems

MULTI-MISSION POWER

EXTENDING HUMAN CAPABILITIES IN THE WORLD'S TOUGHEST ENVIRONMENTS



Textron Systems' platforms are renowned for their multi-mission capability, reliability and performance. They operate EO/IR, communications relay and intelligence payloads within a single sortie. The Shadow® M2 Tactical UAS offers dual-payload and SATCOM options and, along with our Shadow RQ-7B Version 2, can carry our Fury™ lightweight precision weapon to execute the complete find-fix-finish chain. Our Aerosonde™ Small UAS offers both land and maritime multi-mission capabilities within a single, highly expeditionary platform. In the toughest environments and most critical applications, Textron Systems' proven platforms deliver a decisive advantage.

TEXTRON Systems

INGENUITY ACCELERATED



textronsystems.com/unmannedsystems

Textron Systems Unmanned Systems is a business of Textron Systems. Aerosonde is a trademark of Aerosonde Pty Ltd. Export Control Warning: The export of these products is subject to the U.S. International Traffic in Arms Regulations. © 2015 AAI Corporation. All rights reserved.



Naval Special Warfare personnel train to operate in highly dynamic, complex, and often ambiguous environments. NSW training is continuously evolving and always advancing to ensure mission success.

with operational-level capabilities. These small footprint and low signature platforms feature sensor suites that leverage miniaturization and form factors that are adaptable to airborne, land-based, and maritime environments and platforms. The relative ease of maintenance and low system cost make these platforms available to many partners. The evolution of Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) into a Navy/NSW/SOF security force assistance center of excellence is an initiative that radically advances our ability to build partnerships and partner capacity. NAVSCIATTS has already begun pilot courses on unmanned aerial system operations, intelligence fusion, and operations integration to generate capabilities critical to today's security challenges.

Over recent years, NSW has sought training areas closer to our basing areas to generate and sustain our force while meeting personnel and operational tempo (time away from home) constraints. Key initiatives have centered on Fort Story, Virginia, and La Posta, California, and have been effective in augmenting force generation requirements. Still, the NSW enterprise on the West Coast meets only 42 percent of Basic Facilities Requirements (BFR), a third of which is from the World War II era. NSW's Coastal Campus project in San Diego, resourced by both the Navy and USSOCOM and positively supported by the local community, is the single most important effort impacting the current and future operational readiness of the NSW force. This project will replace aging, outdated facilities with the infrastructure necessary to meet the requirements and size of today's force. By continuing to draw training facilities closer to home, NSW is preserving PERSTEMPO for operations and mitigating the inefficiencies of deploying to train.

Conclusion

Addressing dynamic global security issues and protecting America's interests remains a challenge. Ironically, as we seek greater levels of security and stability in the world, the one constant that we can count on is that of constant change. The root drivers of insecurity and instability that precipitated 9/11 have not been resolved or sufficiently mitigated. USSOCOM's SOF pillars and the Navy's Maritime Strategy recognize that they are likely to remain unresolved for some time.

The uncertain environment in which we operate presents opportunities. Many nations are willing to engage and partner with us, and this highlights the core of our operational approach: to engage with our interagency counterparts and country teams to be part of an integrated effort; to win the trust and confidence and build the capacities and interoperability with our coalition, regional, and host-nation military counterparts; to engage with and coordinate humanitarian support for local civil populations that are vulnerable to the influences of violent extremism; and to maintain the readiness posture to respond to crises, contingencies, and in the worst case, major theater war. NSW assesses and selects the very best personnel suited to meeting these diverse requirements. Rapidly adapting to change and cultivating the tremendous talent that exists across the Naval Special Warfare enterprise for the long term gives USSOCOM, the U.S. Navy, the Combatant Commanders, and the nation the edge needed to meet current and emerging security challenges. ■

USASOC: Enduring Commitment

By John D. Gresham

BECAUSE LEADERS OF ANY MILITARY ORGANIZATION love years of stability and very little news about them personally, 2014 was a good year for U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). For starters, 2014 was the first year since 2009, when USASOC and the rest of the Department of Defense (DOD) did not need to operate under the fiscal strictures of a budgetary continuing resolution. Even better, the Congress was able to finally pass a completed budget bill for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, ending the continuing specter of the Budget Control Act and sequestration. This fiscal stability had rapid and positive effects on every part of DOD, including USASOC.

Within weeks, training and exercises were back on schedule, and acquisition teams around the command began to receive badly needed supplies and materials, including ammunition, fuel, and replacement parts. The sudden certainty of having almost two years of funding clearly and completely approved by Congress and the administration was a "new normal" for many at USASOC and the rest of the U.S. special warfare community. One can only hope that elected officials will keep that in mind as they prepare the budget for fiscal year 2016.

Another positive aspect at USASOC came from its command team over nearly three years: Commanding General Lt. Gen. Charles T. "Charlie" Cleveland and senior enlisted adviser, Command Sgt. Maj. George A. Bequer.

Once again in 2014, Cleveland demonstrated his reputation as one of America's quietest, "quiet professionals," by rarely speaking publically. One notable exception came on May 22 at the Memorial Square adjacent to USASOC headquarters. There, he addressed families and friends

of the USASOC soldiers lost in 2013, as their names were added to the memorial wall.

"They were brave, they were tough, they were strong, they were noble, and they were honorable. They were teammates and they fought without hesitation, for each other. They are our heroes, and it is fitting and proper that we never forget them. On this noble wall, we add the names of 18 great Americans who represent the strength of our country; the country's recognition that to adequately defend ourselves in today's dangerous world, we must be willing to put at risk the best of our young by asking them to take up arms. These soldiers are remarkable examples of who we are as a nation, as an Army. Together they represent the strength of our way of life and they are heroes in which we believe in the underlying and enduring commitment that all Americans share to our country's defense. In our losses, we see ourselves and our children. It doesn't matter what brought you to the fight, simply if you and your loved one fought underneath a set of Army Special Operations Colors, you are family. And today we mourn with you and our hearts ache for you. These are all warriors, soldiers of whom much was asked and from whom all was taken because they chose this calling," said Cleveland. "They will never be forgotten and forever those who follow will see their names here, and know they gave all for all Americans. They stepped forward and demonstrated to the world that our liberty will never be conceded. May their memories live on forever and our country forever be inspired by their sacrifice."

Another important occurrence took place within USASOC on Oct. 18, with the activation of a North Carolina



Aviators from 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, conduct a Maritime External Air Transportation System (MEATS) training evolution in Moses Lake, Washington, with Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen from Special Boat Team 12, stationed at Naval Base Coronado, California. MEATS is a way to move a watercraft from a point on land or water to another location using an Army MH-47G Chinook helicopter. The crewmen rig the boat to the helicopter as it hovers above, and then climb a rope ladder to board the helicopter before moving to the final destination, where they will slide down a rope to the boat before the helicopter disconnects the hoist cables.

UNDER STRESS. IN THE DARK. WITH GLOVES ON.

If a tool isn't a benefit to the individual using the equipment under these conditions, then it's not worth using.

This is why B.E. Meyers builds things differently. We are continually evolving.

B.E. Meyers has been serving the unique needs of the special operations warfighter for nearly two decades and has been doing so with the utmost commitment to quality and reliability knowing that lives and the success of the mission depend it.

As technology advances and a new battlefield emerges we will continue to provide solutions that make the modern warfighter more effective and more lethal.

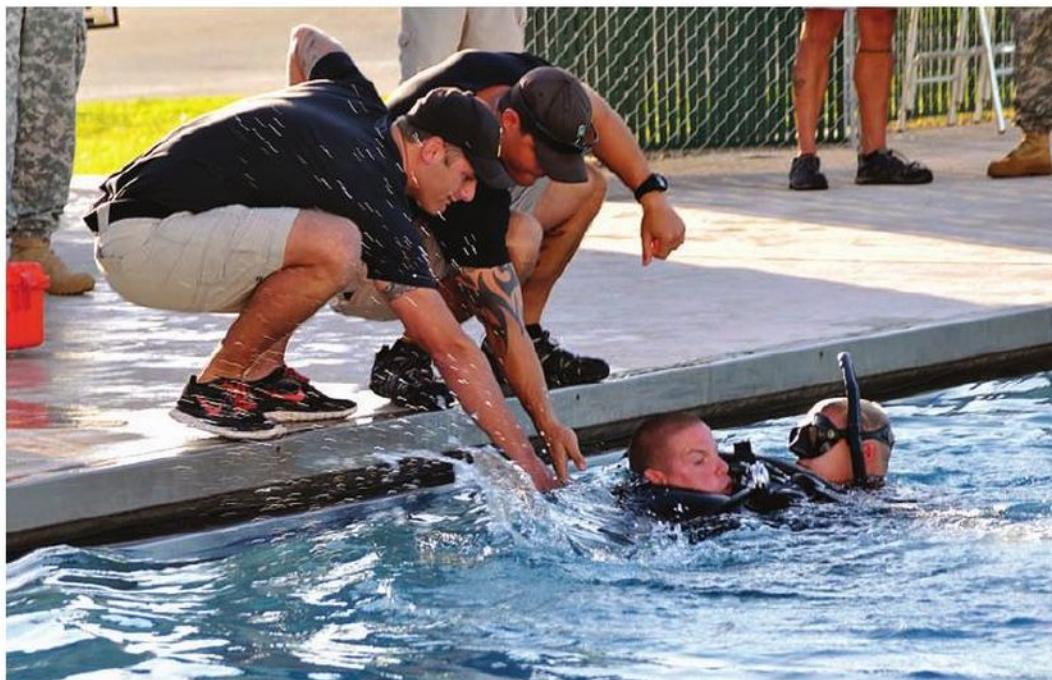


INFRARED LASERS // HAIL & WARNING // CUSTOM OEM INTEGRATION



© B.E. MEYERS & CO., INC. All rights reserved.

www.BEMEYERS.com
For sales inquiries contact sales@bemeyers.com



Instructors pull out Staff Sgt. Stephen McNally during a casualty simulation at the Special Forces Underwater Operations School. The commanding general of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS) selected Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), as the JFKSWCS and U.S. Army Special Operations Command Safety Program of the Year for fiscal year 2013.

National Guard Special Operations Detachment (SOD). The SOD will support and augment Special Operations Command (SOCOM) elements and operations worldwide as required. Its operations will focus on specific mission planning, bringing civilian subject-matter expertise and knowledge for a variety of mission categories. This SOD is one of 11 that have so far been stood up around the United States, each of which supports a specific SOCOM headquarters.

John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS)

On May 30, 2014, Brig. Gen. Eric P. Wendt (since promoted to major general), took command at the JFKSWCS from Brig. Gen. David G. Fox (who is retiring), having previously served as the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) commander at Special Operations Command-Korea (SOCKOR). Cleveland, who presided over the change-of-command ceremony, said of Wendt:

"Brig. Gen. Wendt is the right man to step up and take command of SWCS. He is an exceptionally well-rounded leader and uniquely qualified to command SWCS ... [Eric] made substantial strides [in Korea] to improve our relationship with our Korean partners and to build the foundation for a multinational special operations forces approach to any impending problems on the Peninsula. Eric will, without a doubt, carry on SWCS's well-earned legacy of excellence; making better the initiatives we have underway."

In July, Wendt was joined by a new deputy commander, Col. Robert C. McDowell, who had just finished up commanding the 1st Special Forces Group (SFG-A) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. In addition,

both officers were ably assisted throughout 2014 by their incumbent chief warrant officer 5, Heriberto Serrano Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Gilland. Throughout 2014, these soldiers, along with many others like them, continued the vital work of qualifying and training new Special Forces (SF), Civil Affairs (CA), and Psychological Operations soldiers for the many USASOC units supported by the JFKSWCS. This included a full schedule of culmination events for the various community courses within the JFKSWCS, including the famous Robin Sage graduation exercise. Since 1974, the fictional country of Pineland has been fought over by America's best of the best. Usually held in the counties west of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and supported by the local community, the Robin Sage events ensure that the standards and quality that have made USASOC special warfare professionals so desirable across the world are maintained.

U.S. Army Special Forces Command (SFC)

"As a regiment and command, we are prepared to assume any mission or engage emerging threats presented to us," said Brig. Gen. Darsie D. Rogers, who spent all of 2014 as the commander of SFC, and the SF Regiment. Ably assisting Rogers throughout 2014 was Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Edwards, his senior enlisted adviser. Like the rest of USASOC, SFC benefited greatly from the fiscal stability of the congressional budget deal throughout 2014, as they were able to resume a full schedule of international engagements and exercises beyond their existing combat commitments. This included the continued growth of the Joint Cooperative Engagement Training (JCET) program, which deploys SF teams to host nations around the globe to enhance and professionalize their own security/military forces. One



A U.S. Army Special Forces soldier assigned to Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan provides security during an advising mission in Afghanistan, April 10, 2014.

of the key examples of the “Global SOF Network” concept created by former SOCOM Commander Adm. William H. McRaven and laid out by President Barack Obama in his 2014 West Point commencement speech, JCET is focused upon building partner-nation capability and capacity. In addition, JCET missions have the added benefit of helping build personal relationships with key officers and officials of allied partners.

U.S. Southern Command’s (SOUTHCOM) TSOC, Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH), thanks to an absence of regional conflict in their area of responsibility (AOR), was able to run a number of JCET operations throughout 2014. These included missions to Central America, where SF teams on JCET missions work closely with security forces in countries like Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Belize, helped train local personnel in the skills necessary to better interdict transnational organized crime trafficking into Mexico and North America. SF JCET also ran in venues throughout the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. This highly successful program, funded annually by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is just one example of what USASOC and SOCOM will probably be tasked with as America’s overseas combat commitments continue to wind down.

75th Ranger Regiment

Since 2013, Col. Christopher S. Vanek, has been commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, which he retained throughout 2014. Along with his senior enlisted adviser, Command Sgt. Maj. Charles W. Albertson, Vanek enjoyed a year that celebrated many of the regiment’s legendary combat achievements, as they remained fully committed worldwide to today’s fights. This included

the 70th anniversary commemoration ceremonies for Operation Overlord, the invasion of Europe. Rangers were prominent throughout the ceremonies, especially at Pointe du Hoc, the site of 2nd Battalion’s legendary landing and cliff climb to destroy a battery of heavy German guns that threatened the landing beaches.

In addition, the regiment also conducted, for the first time in years due to budget limitations, a full schedule of training exercises for components not directly committed to combat. This included Rangers from 3rd Battalion who deployed in October to South Korea for an all-up deployment exercise in support of the U.S. 8th Army and SOCKOR. This included parachute jumps, small arms training, and other events that lasted over eight weeks in fall 2014. The first major exercise since before 9/11 involving the regiment, the deployment was widely applauded by USASOC leadership, including the 3/75th liaison officer, Maj. David Uthlaut.

“Korea was chosen because of the great training facilities and support infrastructure it offers to rotational units,” Uthlaut said. “The leadership of U.S. Forces-Korea, 8th Army, and Special Operations Command-Korea, has all been extremely receptive to our presence, actively setting the conditions for our success and providing reinforcement as we work through initial integration. ... This relationship is still evolving. We believe we have set the stage for more in-depth interoperability training for future training rotations.”

Another significant Ranger event in 2014 is likely to be one of the most important American SOF stories of 2015: the inclusion of women. Over the past several years, USASOC has been exploring and developing the methods by which women would be able to qualify for and attend the prestigious Ranger Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. The Ranger Course is among the most difficult and grueling military training curriculums in the world today. As this volume is going to press, the first

integrated Ranger selection and qualification course is being conducted, with several women still competing from the 19 who previously passed the Ranger Training Assessment Course. And while there is no guarantee that any of them will succeed, that any of them survived the assessment phase is a testament to their individual intensity and fortitude.

Army Special Operations Aviation Command (ARSOAC)

Since its creation in 2011, ARSOAC has been a highly dynamic organization, and this did not change in 2014. ARSOAC's second commanding officer, Brig. Gen. Clayton M. Hutmacher, was relieved by Brig. Gen. Erik C. Peterson on June 10. Interestingly, the two officers are swapping jobs, with Peterson coming from, and Hutmacher going to become, deputy commanding general for support of the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea. Cleveland, who presided over the change-of-command ceremony, spoke extensively about Hutmacher's work over the previous several years.

"What most don't see is that he is a dedicated teammate, a humble man whose sense of humor, positive attitude, genuine compassion for soldiers and the units he commands and supports, and uncompromising standards of excellence in all things aviation and Army, mark him as the finest Army aviation leader with whom I served, and has distinguished him from his peers," said Cleveland. "Over the last two years, Clay has guided the fledgling command from a newly formed headquarters to a fully

functional resourcing headquarters and member of the USASOC team of teams. In two short years under Clay's leadership as the second USASOAC commanding general, we have seen dramatic changes in our Special Operations Aviation capability. Clay's tenure has seen the development of a greatly enhanced aviation FID [Foreign Internal Defense] capability, a maturing of the command as an advocate for the entire Special Operations Aviation enterprise, the procurement of the C-27J and of course, the continued world-class support that the 160th SOAR [Special Operations Aviation Regiment] continues to provide around the world."

Another ARSOAC command group change included Command Sgt. Maj. David L. Lemon passing his responsibilities to Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory M. Chambers, while Command Chief Warrant Officer Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bob D. Witzler did the same with his replacement, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Douglas M. Englen. On Dec. 5, Witzler retired after 29 years of active service in a ceremony at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the home of the 160th SOAR (the "Night Stalkers"). Hutmacher, former commanding general of ASOAC, presided over the ceremony.

"Bob epitomizes all the qualities I admire in Night Stalkers," Hutmacher said. "He was unwavering in his commitment to the soldiers in his units to his left and right and most importantly to his SOF operator on the ground, the man in the arena. In the final couple years of service as my command chief warrant officer in the regiment and then again at the ARSOAC, he displayed a level of professionalism and competence which I have rarely seen in my career. It's not so rare here [in Army Special Operations Aviation] because of the type of soldiers that



**U.S. Army
Rangers assigned
to 2nd Battalion,
75th Ranger
Regiment, fire a
120 mm mortar
during a tactical
training exercise
on Camp Roberts,
California, Jan.
30, 2014. Rangers
constantly train
to maintain
the highest
level of tactical
proficiency.**

When **interagency** is your next mission KU is your next master's.

You've already worked across geopolitical lines,

but by learning to work across agency lines, you will spearhead tomorrow's U.S. foreign policy.

- » The University of Kansas offers you a specialized master's degree: Global and International Studies, with a concentration in **Interagency Studies**.
- » It supports the Command and General Staff College and is aligned with CGSC curriculum.
- » **And it's designed for you** — officers from Special Operations Forces and civilians in the interagency communities.

For more information, please visit gmp.ku.edu

Contact us

Shannon O'Lear
Director, Interagency Studies Program
785-864-2041

Col. Mike Denning, USMC (Ret.)
Director, Graduate Military Programs
785-864-1684

KU CENTER FOR GLOBAL
& INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

DPSG USA, Inc. Wunderbar™ Tow-Bars



MATV M1245 80K Wunderbar™ (NSN: 4910-01-628-0633)
and Wunderbar™ Mount Kit (Part # DPWM8000M)

When you are on your own and require like-vehicle recovery capability, the most important characteristics of your tow-bars are

- **Strength (Unprecedented)**
- **Safety (Hook up in Park)**
- **Speed (Recover in Seconds)**

Wunderbars provide Security when you need it most!

Full line of Towing and Recovery equipment at
www.dpsgUSA.com

DPSG USA, Inc. All Rights Reserved

**Where Unconventional Warriors
Sharpen Skills**

SPECIAL OPERATIONS
U.S. UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE,
ADVANCED SKILLS, TACTICS AND SERVICES

LONE OPERATOR TRAINING SERIES
ADVANCED TACTICAL DRIVER'S TRAINING
CI\HOMEMADE EXPLOSIVES
SPECIALIZED EXERCISE DEVELOPMENT
CI\HUMINT

EXPLORE MORE OPPORTUNITIES AT
WWW.NEKSERVICESINC.COM

NEKINFO@CUBIC.COM
(719) 247-4300





LEFT: Pilots from the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Flight Company (UFC) conduct a C-27J training flight April 24, 2014. Four pilots went through the initial training and are now responsible for training additional UFC pilots.

BELOW: A jumpmaster assigned to the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade conducts pre-jump training and exiting procedures from the ramp of an American C-130 Hercules aircraft for Dominican Republic special operations service members during a Joint Combined Exercise Training (JCET) operation at the 4th Paracaidista FARD, Comando de Fuerzas Especiales, Fuerza Aerea training facility, on San Isidro Air Field in the Dominican Republic, March 18, 2014. The event was part of a monthlong JCET held from Feb. 17 to March 20, 2014.

serve here, but I will tell you outside of this august group, it is extremely rare. It is not common, and Bob is the type of soldier that's extremely hard to find."

Another command change came at the 160th SOAR on June 27, when Col. John R. Evans Jr., handed over command to Col. Michael J. Hertzendorf. Commenting on Evans' two years in command of the regiment, Peterson said:

"During his time with the regiment, John Evans has courageously led change, nurtured and strengthened the positive Night Stalker ethos and culture. He [Evans] has served as a steward of the proud Night Stalker legacy and masterfully grew and developed an entire generation of confident leaders of character."

Finally, 2014 was a dynamic year for the airframes they operate, both new and old. The newest, the C-27J Spartan, stood up flight company operations in 2014, and is already providing all of USASOC with vital support, training, and liaison services across a wide variety of activities. The oldest, the MH-60K Black Hawk SOF transport helicopters, were flown and stood down for the last time in 2014. Finally, USASOC and ARSOAC, while they do not commonly talk about their dealings and usage of unmanned aerial systems (UAS), made some quiet news within the community in 2014. Much of this centered around an ARSOAC-hosted UAS conference, providing industry and military leaders an opportunity to share ideas, and better define the future needs of the American SOF community overall.

95th Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB)

For the 95th CAB, 2014's stability came in the form of completing the largest CA community enlargement in its history. Having grown from a single battalion to an



entire brigade of five regionally oriented battalions in just a handful of years, the 95th is now the most powerful and important CA force in the U.S. Army. Last year also saw the 95th changing commanders, with Col. Scot N. Storey taking charge on June 5. His predecessor, Col. James C. Brown, is now part of the staff of Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A) under former JFKSWCS commander, Maj. Gen. Edward M. Reeder Jr. Cleveland presided over the change of command ceremony.

"I want to thank you and the entire brigade for your service and recognize your vital contributions to the fight in Afghanistan and around the world," said Cleveland, addressing the soldiers of the brigade. "Your unit above all others has, over the longest period, had the highest [operational tempo]. That the unit has successfully sustained the workload, excelled in your missions overseas, and innovated so well back home is a testament to your dedication and commitment. To the great Civil Affairs soldiers and leaders, be proud of who you are, what you do, and who you do it with, for you are without equal – *Sine Pari*."



4th/8th Military Information Support Groups (MISGs)

2014 saw the 4th MISG and 8th MISG move under Special Forces Command in a reorganization, where they will remain. In June, Col. Stuart P. Goldsmith took over the unit from Col. Robert A. Warburg, who had served as the commander since, 2012. Rogers, commander of SFC, presided over the change of command ceremony.

"The year ahead offers tremendous change, challenge, and opportunity," Rogers said, as he addressed Goldsmith. "You bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and I am confident that MISOC is in the right hands. Welcome to the team."

The 4th and 8th cover the roles and missions that also are termed "Psychological Warfare Operations," and are among the largest such units in the world today. While details of their organization, operations, and procedures must remain classified, the group did conduct one publicly acknowledged exercise in 2014. The group-level battle staff and planning exercise was conducted in the fall, in support of a Joint Information Support Task Force. 4th MISG commanders and staff tested their ability to track regional MISO assets in support of a hypothetical large-scale Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operation, including large-scale use of reach back assets. The



LEFT: Col. Stuart P. Goldsmith addresses the audience during the Military Information Support Operations Command change-of-command ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. Goldsmith assumed command of the unit from the departing commander, Col. Robert A. Warburg.

ABOVE: The 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) officially broke ground on its 120,000-square-foot brigade headquarters facility during ceremonies Nov. 13, 2014. The facility signifies a modernization effort that will greatly improve the support the 528th is able to provide to Army special operations soldiers worldwide.

exercise also tested the capabilities of the new USASOC Special Operations Mission Training Center (SOMTC) at Fort Bragg, which helps provide a fully integrated and objective-based training scenario for the participants.

528th Sustainment Brigade

Col. Daniel K. Rickleff, the commander of the 528th Sustainment Brigade, continued to command this most varietal of USASOC units throughout 2014. Nowhere else in the U.S. Army is there a sustainment unit commanded by an O-6, that has such a diverse set of roles and missions being accomplished by such a small group of soldiers. And in 2014, Rickleff had the pleasure of breaking ground for a new home for his brigade. Long based in World War II-era legacy buildings, the 528th broke ground for a new \$27 million facility that will consolidate the entire unit into a single complex. In a ceremony held on Nov. 13, ground was broken for a 120,000-square-foot brigade headquarters off of Gruber Road. In addition to consolidating the many parts of the 528th scattered around the post, the new headquarters will also include a modernized maintenance facility to help keep USASOC's 21st century array of equipment and vehicles up to date and in service.

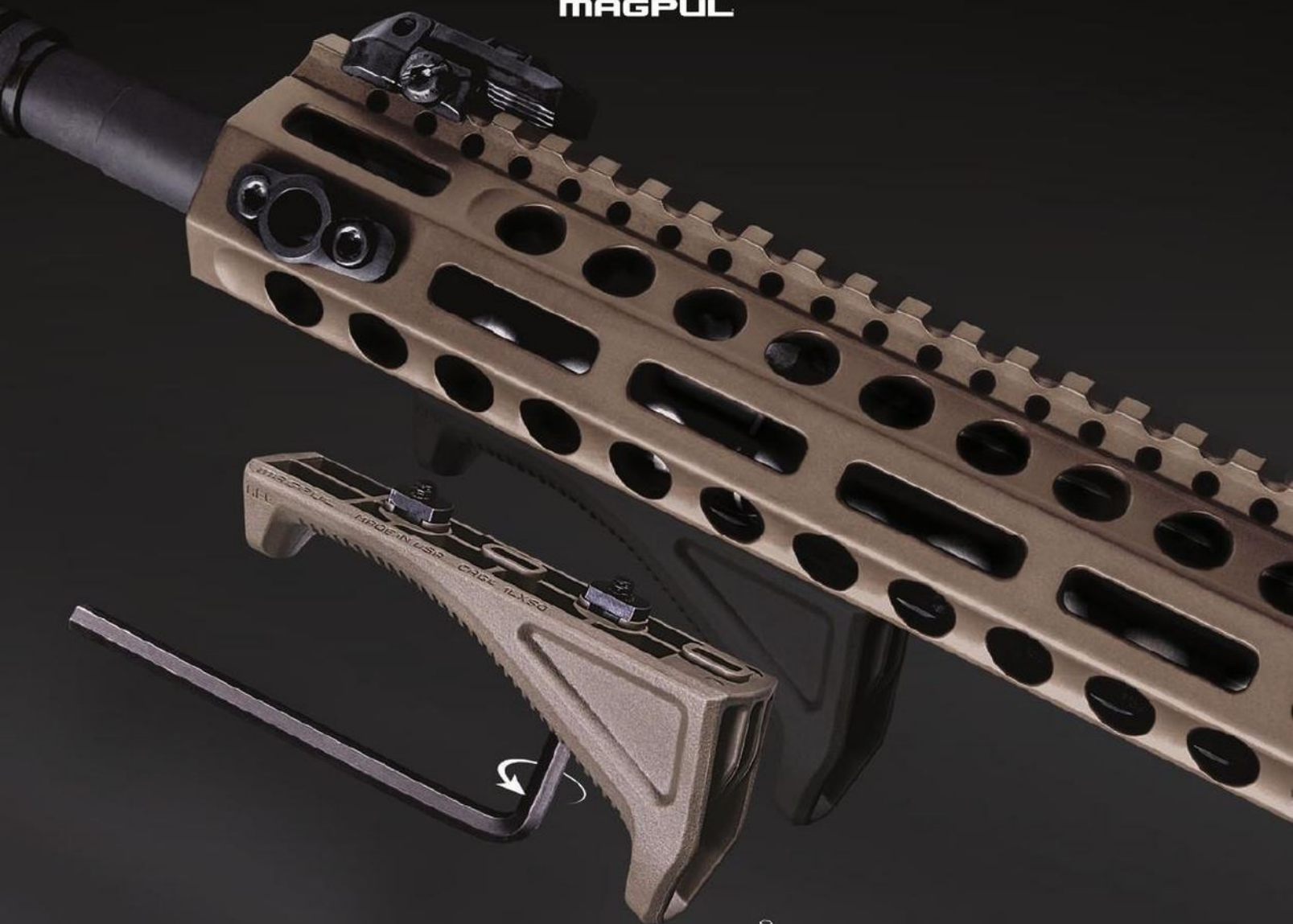
"Today, we commemorate the groundbreaking of the brigade headquarters, Special Troops Battalion headquarters, and an adjoining maintenance facility," Rickleff said of this notable beginning. "This marks a critical point in the brigade's history as we currently redesign and reorganize the brigade to best support special operations forces globally and integrate under 1st Special Forces Command." ■



M-LOK

MAGPUL.COM/MLOK

MAGPUL

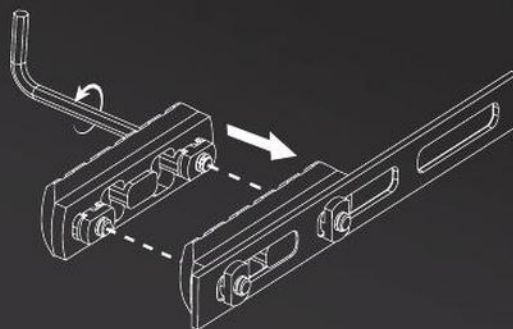


M-LOK



MODULAR ACCESSORY LOCKING SYSTEM

M-LOK is a modular locking mounting system for direct attachment of accessories. Designed by Magpul Industries as an evolution of their MOE® slot system used since 2007.



International Special Operations Forces Review

By Nigel West

WITH WESTERN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (SOF) in a process of gradual withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, and a very distinct change in posture, from long-term commitments to emergency deployments and training, 2014 proved to be a momentous year, especially in eastern Europe, where Russia annexed the whole of the Crimea in what was an almost bloodless operation.

The entire episode, which reportedly was not anticipated by any Western intelligence agency, was facilitated by Spetsnaz units, SOF groups very familiar to NATO analysts during the Cold War. The word itself is a contraction of *spetsialnogo naznacheniya*, meaning “of special purpose” or designation, and has a tradition dating back to 1957, when the first Red Army SOF battalions were formed by the Soviet GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) and consisted, unlike their Western counterparts that drew on experienced personnel with several years of military service, of selected conscripts.

After the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the GRU continued virtually unchanged, and in the subsequent era, GRU Spetsnaz saw action in Bosnia and Chechnya, and were involved in a counterterrorism role in the rescue attempts at Moscow’s Dubrovka Theater in October 2002, and the ending of the Beslan school siege in September 2004.

Neither of these interventions ended well, or enhanced the GRU’s reputation, and there were further embarrassments during the 2008 war with Georgia, a conflict marked by a series of avoidable friendly fire accidents. In one, six paratroopers at Zugdidi, just outside Abkhazia, were killed by Russian artillery which failed to lift their barrage when the troops began their assault on the town.

Like the U.S. Green Berets and Britain’s Special Air Service regiment, Spetsnaz hold an almost mythical status within their country’s armed services, but their perceived poor performance in Chechnya over a decade from 1991, and more recently in Georgia, led the general staff to wrest control of the organization from the GRU



“Little Green Men” in the Crimea, Ukraine.

PHOTO BY ANTON HOLOBODKO



and develop separate, individual Spetsnaz in all military districts. The GRU responded with a major investment in a new headquarters at “the aquarium,” the top security compound on Moscow’s Khodinka military airport, and in the creation of a control center, or Senezh, at Solnechnogorsk, just northwest of the capital.

The GRU Spetsnaz consists of eight brigades, of which three are held in reserve. All are thought to be slightly

under-strength and lack their own helicopter support. At the end of February 2014, all were believed to have participated in the invasion of Crimea, their movement from their bases apparently unnoticed by the West.

In what was to be a textbook example of a SOF operation, Spetsnaz acted in a battlefield reconnaissance role. Whereas conventional Spetsnaz training implied penetration deep behind NATO lines to seek and



We offer large company capabilities
while providing small company agility

Use of released U.S. Navy imagery
does not constitute product or
organizational endorsement
of any kind by the U.S. Navy.
U.S. Navy Photo by Mass
Communication Specialist
2nd Class Meranda Kehler



- Proven trusted SOF partner
- Provide rapid tailored solutions for SOF challenges
- Establish adaptive teaming for SOF mission support



WHEN THE MISSION MATTERS
OIW MARINE DELIVERS

OIW marine
A VIGOR INDUSTRIAL COMPANY



MISSION-CRITICAL WATERCRAFT

OIWMarine.com



Russian Spetsnaz GRU in 2008.

destroy the enemy's tactical nuclear weapons, on this occasion, they were debadged and inserted as the "tip of the spear" to secure key strongpoints in anticipation of the arrival of regular forces. In the Crimea, Russian SOF were carried in Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships to seize the airports at Belbek and Simferopol, and to take control of the parliament and local Ukrainian government buildings.

Units involved reportedly included paratroopers of the 31 Gvardeyskaya Brigade from Ulianovsk, a crack unit commanded by Col. Gennadiy Anashkin, who had seen action in Bosnia and two Chechen wars, and famously had captured the Vaziani airbase near Tbilisi, Georgia. Also seen were elements of the 22nd Guards Brigade from Krasnaya Polyana, near Sochi; the "blue berets" of the 45th Regiment; and the 346th Brigade.

In the face of constant Kremlin denials of any Russian participation, positive identification of these units was difficult because the troops carried no insignia, wore ski masks, and did not engage in conversation, except, reportedly, with children. Apparently they had also been stripped of cellphones and personal identification papers before deployment, but some characteristic tattoos were recognized that were closely associated with the VDV Air Force amphibious commandos, and the GRU.

The "anonymous" troops were also exceptionally well equipped, wearing the newest Kevlar helmets, *ratnik* (warrior) combat gear, the latest 6B43 bullet-proof body armor, and armed with AK-100-series Kalashnikov assault rifles (fitted with grenade launchers, combat optics and night-vision thermal sights) and 12.7 mm sniper/anti-materiel rifles. Conversations with the reticent but well-mannered men suggested they were *kontraktniki*, or contract soldiers, and not conscripts.

Ukrainians referred to them as "little green men," due both to their unadorned but latest-issue uniforms and their mysterious origins.

Within days of the initial intervention, Russian regulars poured over the narrow Kerch Strait, and by March an estimated 30,000 troops had been established, together with artillery units at Perekop and Grad multiple rocket launchers at Dzhankoy.

By March 26, in a swift, largely bloodless occupation, Spetsnaz troops had raised Russian flags over no fewer than 193 Ukrainian military sites across Crimea and passed day-to-day control of the streets and vehicle check-points to pro-Russian militias armed with what appeared to be captured foreign weapons, such as the Polish PZR Grom man-portable, shoulder-launched, anti-aircraft missile, some of which were known to have been looted in Georgia.

This first phase was then followed by the infiltration of yet more Russian SOF across the border into eastern Ukraine in support of local proxies in Donetsk, Lugansk, and Dnipropetrovsk, and more GRU Spetsnaz took over from the Ukrainians the A-2544 base north of Dzhankoy in the Kherson Oblast. Indeed, the self-styled military commander of the newly proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, Col. Igor Strelkov, was identified by Western analysts as a GRU professional with links to the Federal Security Service (FSB) counterintelligence agency.

This astonishing annexation met with almost no armed resistance, in spite of the presence of two Ukrainian SOF units, the 801st Naval Special Operations Battalion at the marine facility in Feodosiya, and the 3rd Special Operations Regiment, both of which were quickly surrounded and disarmed.

Columbia Helicopters

The Powerful Difference

An unmatched commercial - military collaboration on the battlefield identifies Columbia Helicopters as the premiere military rotary wing lift provider of choice.

Contact Columbia Helicopters today for a comprehensive capabilities briefing that will clearly demonstrate how a Columbia Helicopter's partnership can expand your operational tempo and operational readiness to the next level.

We Operate.
We Maintain.



503-678-1222

www.colheli.com





Soldiers from the 8th Commando Kandak patrol through Nawa Garay village, Kajran District, Daykundi province, Afghanistan. The commandos partner with coalition special operations forces to conduct operations throughout Daykundi, Uruzgan, and Zabul provinces.

Russian success in the Crimea, which was answered by NATO with the imposition of personal financial sanction on members of Vladimir Putin's regime and on the GRU director, Igor Sergun, most likely would have been repeated in the eastern Ukraine if, on July 17, Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 had not been shot down by a Buk surface-to-air missile, causing worldwide outrage. The atrocity was probably committed by local separatists who had enjoyed Russian sponsorship, and perhaps without any direct authorization from Moscow – although the Ukrainian authorities released what purported to be very incriminating intercepted cellphone conversations between militia commanders and their Russian coordinators over the frontier, based on an unverified transcript reported in the *Kiev Post* newspaper.

Whatever the exact circumstances, the death of 283 passengers and 15 crew of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200 attracted global condemnation and left the incursion at a stalemate, with the pro-Russian gunmen in control of much of the two eastern provinces.

The Kremlin's conflict with Kiev caught NATO by surprise, and appeared to cast Spetsnaz with a new strategic role – beyond its orthodox SOF mission of clandestine reconnaissance – of deniable engagement by companies of *razvedchiki*, or scouts, undertaking sabotage and other tasks in Russia's "near-foreign" lands. The political impact of what had occurred would be profound, especially for policymakers contemplating the implications of a reappearance of old Soviet-style "active measures" for Poland and the Baltic NATO membership.

This perceptible change in strategy, from extending the Spetsnaz role far beyond a more familiar counterterrorism commitment, made so familiar by the FSB's Alpha teams, could have far-reaching consequences.

Perhaps part of the reason the West was caught unawares by the events in Ukraine may have been the plethora of distracting small wars preoccupying SOF across the globe. The civil war in Syria had exacerbated regional tensions, and in August 2014, British and U.S. SOF were dropped into the Mount Sinjar area of northern Iraq as part of Operation Shader to report on the plight of Yazidi refugees fleeing sectarian persecution by Islamic State *jihadis*. Islamic State (also known as ISIL or ISIS) fighters had begun to claim huge swaths of Iraq and Syria, and along with air strikes, carried out first by U.S. forces and then an increasing number of other nations, the Obama administration lobbied Congress for permission to expand American presence on the ground. U.S. and coalition advisers went back to work training Iraqi troops, lending support to existing Iraqi units, and protecting key cities and bases, as even Baghdad came under threat. Wrangling continues today between the administration and Congress as to the scale of the American commitment on the ground.

Islamic extremism, manifested in West Africa, Libya, East Africa, the Arabian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, has become a familiar adversary to the African Union and the West's coalition partners, but the development of new technology, such as drones and canopy-penetrating surveillance, has eased the burden on special operations forces, thereby allowing them to expand their training and mentoring activities in non-combat scenarios, and undertake quick in-and-out rescues, usually to secure the release of Western victims of abduction gangs. One of the last hostages, Serge Lazarevic, a tourist who had been grabbed in November 2011 while visiting Timbuktu, was freed in Mali in November 2014, the French government having negotiated an exchange in which several dozen Islamists were released.

Multi-INT Persistent Overwatch

Platform-adaptable, cost effective, city-sized coverage

Logos Technologies' persistent surveillance systems do more than collect data — our sensors provide real-time, multisource intelligence directly to the warfighter.

Adaptable. Operationally efficient.



Redkite

Mission-ready, highly compact, wide-area surveillance pod

- Ultra-lightweight – less than 30lbs
- Coverage area up to four kilometers in diameter
- On-board storage of up to eight hours of mission data
- Suitable for UAS, fixed and rotary wing aircraft



Kestrel

360° wide-area persistent surveillance sensor system for aerostats

- Wide-area motion imagery of city-sized area
- DVR-like rapid data access
- Ready now – more than 150,000 operational hours already logged
- Advanced data compression storage, indexing and retrieval



Hermes

Platform-agnostic, high-performance multi-INT pod

- Lightweight, suitable for mid-sized UAVs and manned aircraft
- Onboard data processing
- Day/night ISR capability



02 JUN 13 17:51

05 JUN 13 18:03

04 JUN 13 06:22

- WATCHBOXES
- REAL-TIME TRACKING
- FORENSIC TRACKING



An Afghan National Army (ANA) commando, 6th Special Operations Kandak, returns fire into a green zone after receiving harassment shots from insurgents during an operation in the Baraki Barak District, Logar province, Afghanistan, June 22, 2014. U.S. Special Forces and ANA commandos provided security in the area as coalition forces constructed a new Afghan local police checkpoint in the village.

Part of the change in posture has been brought about by the removal of many coalition assets from Afghanistan, where both the United States and U.K. administrations pledged to retain some limited SOF cadres, chiefly for training purposes under Operation Resolute Support to enhance the existing 14,000 Afghan SOF, National Directorate of Security (NDS), and 22,000 Afghan police. By the end of 2014, the internal security apparatus in Afghanistan had developed nine Commando Kandaks (battalions) to undertake combat operations, together with 11 specialized night-raid elements, and 19 provincial response companies acting in a role akin to SWAT teams.

Headed by Rahmatullah Nabil, who was formally appointed in August 2013, but had actually run the NDS for the previous two years, the organization employs a staff estimated at more than 20,000. Despite some reported cases of the maltreatment of detainees, the NDS has reached a high standard under U.S. SOF sponsorship and has developed a useful capability, including the mounting of night-time raids on Taliban strongholds.

However, in a year when the Taliban killed or wounded between 7,000 and 9,000 Afghan government soldiers (by comparison with more than 2,200 Americans killed and about 20,000 injured over the past 13 years), there remains some skepticism about whether this commitment to Kabul will be sufficient to prevent the country from plunging back into long-term tribal conflict.

The plan nevertheless remains for coalition SOF to operate under the direction of the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A) in Kabul, but the British component would be drastically reduced under a Ministry of Defense plan under consideration in London that would cut the current Special Forces Group strength, presently around 3,500 soldiers and marines, to between 1,750 and 2,000.

Created in 2012, originally under the command of U.S. Gen. Raymond A. "Tony" Thomas, SOJTF-A consisted of 13,000 special operations and support personnel, enhanced by 200 aircraft (including helicopters and Predator and Reaper drones), drawn from 25 different countries, including some non-NATO partners, such as Albania, Romania, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. SOJTF-A deployed some 61 teams to conduct village stability operations with the local Afghan police, with a further 50 similar teams partnering other corresponding Afghan security units. Additionally, a subordinate training cadre, designated SOJTF-B (Bragg), based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, prepared the component SOF units in anticipation of their operational deployment.

In August 2014, Thomas was reassigned from the CIA, where he had been associate director for Military Affairs since 2013, to take command of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Simultaneously, Gen. Joseph L. Votel, the former JSOC commander, was promoted to head U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), succeeding Adm. William McRaven.

The U.K.'s proposed radical cuts, reflecting budget demands in Whitehall, were contained in a list of recommendations that were delivered to Maj. Gen. Mark Carleton-Smith, the U.K.'s director of Special Forces since 2012. A Special Air Service (SAS) veteran who had commanded 22 SAS between 2007 and 2009, Carleton-Smith was required to find substantial financial savings at a time when the Islamic State had taken several British hostages, and one of their captors, the grisly "Jihadi John," identified as Kuwaiti-born British passport-holder Mohammed Emwazi, was beheading them, thereby outraging world opinion. Controversially, the review also suggested the elimination of one of the



GAME ON.

BUILT TO OWN THE TRACK, AND THE STREET

See the 2015 GSX-R lineup at suzukicycles.com



At Suzuki, we want every ride to be safe and enjoyable. So always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Never engage in stunt riding. Study your owner's manual and always inspect your Suzuki before riding. Take a riding skills course. For the course nearest you call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-446-9227. Suzuki engineered the GSX-Rs® for experienced riders. Suzuki firmly believes racing belongs in one place-on the racetrack. Suzuki, the "S" logo, and Suzuki model and product names are Suzuki Trademarks or ®. © Suzuki Motor of America, Inc. 2015.



Soldiers with the Albanian Land Forces, Special Operations Force teams Eagle 5 and Eagle 6, pose after a joint patrol Feb. 13, 2013, at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

SAS's four sabre squadrons, removing the two reservist SAS units, 21 and 23 SAS, and dispensing altogether with the Special Reconnaissance Regiment, which was only formed in 2005.

The threat to U.K. SOF, at a time when the military situation in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Nigeria is deteriorating, would reduce Britain's capabilities to their position prior the deployments to Afghanistan. It would also limit the U.K.'s ability to respond to, or support, pleas for assistance from Commonwealth countries. For example, in April 2014, some 200 teenage Christian schoolgirls were abducted from Chibok in the north of Nigeria by Boko Haram, leaving the state authorities in Borno, and the federal government in Abuja, apparently powerless to respond. This incident prompted the Nigerian government to accept an American offer to supply a 16-strong advisory team to train nearly 650 Nigerian soldiers at a base near Maiduguri. The beneficiary was to be a Special Forces Brigade, the 72nd Special Forces Battalion, formerly the 72nd Paratroop Battalion, which had previously received Danish *Jaegerkorps* and British instructors, but the project collapsed prematurely in recriminations five months later when the U.S. State Department banned the export of certain weapons, apparently uncertain of how they were going to be deployed, citing Sen. Patrick Leahy's (D-Vt.) 1997 amendment that prevents any U.S. administration from supporting regimes suspected of human rights abuses. In September 2014, the U.S. State Department embargoed the sale of Cobra attack helicopters from Israel. Consequently, the ministers in Abuja approached Moscow for assistance, and arranged for 1,200 Nigerians to undergo Russian training. They also opened negotiations to buy 12 Mi-35 attack helicopters from Belarus, although Belarus has no domestic manufacturers of helicopters, and only repairs and modifies existing aircraft.

While the Cobras would not have been useful in the near term anyway, Nigeria not having the trained personnel necessary to fly or maintain them, U.S. Special Operations Command Africa's Exercise Flintlock bore

fruit in early 2015 as training on communications technologies supplied by the United States enabled a task force of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Benin, and Cameroon to attack Boko Haram in its Sambisa Forest hideouts, freeing more than 500 hostages and throwing the terrorist organization onto the defensive.

In Washington, D.C., controversy centered on the degree to which SOF personnel could be restricted in making public disclosures. This followed publication of a series of books intended to satisfy a public demand for more information about the special operation that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden at the hands of a special mission unit popularly referred to as SEAL Team 6, or DEVGRU, in Abbottabad in May 2011. *SEAL Target Geronimo*, penned by former SEAL Chuck Pfarrer, was among the first accounts, but Pfarrer's version was denied by SOCOM spokesman Col. Tim Nye as well as other special operations officials. Next came the Sept. 4, 2012 publication of *No Easy Day* by a member of the unit, Matt Bissonnette, writing under the pseudonym Mark Owen, which gave a different version of the raid. Another account of the raid, again differing in some details, was written by Mark Bowden in *The Finish*, published in October 2012. More recently, in November 2014, Robert O'Neill identified himself as having been the SEAL who had actually shot and killed bin Laden.

These contradictory claims led to an abortive Department of Justice investigation into unauthorized disclosures, and was the cause of considerable internal friction about the need for secrecy in SOF operations, especially those of a politically sensitive nature.

Thus 2014 turned out to be a year that could be described as a major milestone for SOF, both East and West. ■

FUERZAS COMANDO: To Be the Best of the Best

By John D. Gresham and Shawn E. Gorman

COMPETITION. It is a word that automatically resonates with virtually every member of the special operations forces (SOF) community worldwide. Just to become a member of a credible SOF unit requires a personal competition against the toughest selection, qualification, and training standards a particular country has for its professional military personnel. One only needs to listen to the stories of how Army Rangers, Special Forces (SF – the “Green Berets”), and Navy SEALs are made and trained to know that there is always competition – against oneself, standards, and each other – in the SOF world. So it makes sense that someone would eventually create a SOF competition so that the different special operations communities for a particular region or even the world could see how they measured up against the “best of the best” in their particular profession. Run by U.S. Southern Command’s (SOUTHCOM) Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH), that competition is Fuerzas Comando.

Fuerzas Comando is a competition for the special warfare forces of the United States and its Western Hemisphere allies, especially in Latin America. Usually lasting just over a week, Fuerzas Comando provides a competitive venue and opportunity for international SOF units to showcase their capabilities and skills, as well as an opportunity to build relationships and share ideas. It is exactly the kind of opportunity to build international partner capability and capacity discussed by then-U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Commander Adm. William McRaven in his “Global SOF Network” concept, and President Barack Obama in his 2014 commencement speech at West Point. By bringing together the SOF units of more than two dozen countries extending from the Great White North of Canada to Tierra del Fuego, Fuerzas Comando is helping make the SOF communities of the Western Hemisphere into an interlocking tribe of families.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. RICHARD ANDRADE



Members of a Surinamese special operations team crawl under wire through a trench as part of the Fuerzas Comando stress test event at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, July 27, 2014. The stress events are designed to see how steady a competitor's aim is after he's been pushed to the point of physical exhaustion. Fuerzas Comando, established in 2004, is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored special operations forces skills competition and fellowship program that continues to build the required capacity to confront common threats that cannot be defeated by traditional military means alone.



NORWICH
UNIVERSITY™

Online

EDUCATING LEADERS WHO ARE DRIVEN TO SERVE

As the nation's oldest private military college, Norwich University takes your military experience seriously and awards generous transfer credits for it. Combine your military training and experience with our cutting-edge online curriculum and you can complete your bachelor's degree in less than two years.

Visit online.norwich.edu/specialops to learn more.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE™



FOCUS ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT

A degree in criminal justice can help prepare you for advancement opportunities in the military, civilian law enforcement, security management, intelligence, and public safety.

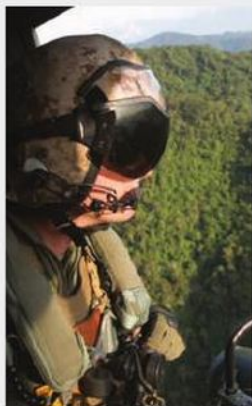
CYBER SECURITY™



IN-DEMAND DEGREE

Through our cyber security program, you can develop highly relevant, in-demand skills that reflect current industry trends and best practices. Norwich is designated as a Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education.

STRATEGIC STUDIES & DEFENSE ANALYSIS™



BOLSTER YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Exclusively for members of the U.S. Special Operations Forces, the SSDA program builds on your military training and experience. Our experiential education allows you to apply what you learn, which can help you reach your goals in the military and beyond.

Let Norwich help you go further. Visit online.norwich.edu/specialops or call 1-866-684-7237.

Use of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement. Non-Discrimination Statement: Norwich University, in compliance with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, or physical handicap in any of its policies, practices, and procedures. Critical Information: www.norwich.edu/consumerdata



TOP LEFT: A special operations competitor from Uruguay zeroes his weapon system during the preparation phases of the Fuerzas Comando 2014 competition.

ABOVE: Members of a Colombian special operations team run across a field to a shoot house at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, on July 29, 2014, as part of a rescue scenario in the penultimate event of Fuerzas Comando 2014.

LEFT: Members of a Jamaican special operations team carry a mannequin from a shoot house at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, as part of a rescue scenario during Fuerzas Comando 2014.

Fuerzas Comando – Origins and Events

As designed, Fuerzas Comando is an eight-day event comprising two components: a military skills exercise competition, and a Countering Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP). It is designed to test, train, and demonstrate the skills of military and police SOF units of the Western Hemisphere, and has been closely watched by other Combatant Commands and Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). SOCSOUTH, the SOUTHCOM TSOC, serves as the U.S. execution agent for the exercise.

When Fuerzas Comando was first created and run in 2004, only 12 countries participated. However, by 2009, that number had expanded to 23 countries and had more than 400 military, police, and civilian personnel participating, with an end goal of earning the title of best SOF team in the Western Hemisphere. In 2015, that number will rise to 27, and is a genuine metric of the effectiveness of both SOUTHCOM and SOCSOUTH in their engagement within the area of responsibility (AOR) over the past several decades. In the quarter century since the end of the Cold War, most of Latin America now looks at the United States as a genuine partner in the region. Furthermore, with the single exception of Venezuela, most countries view the United States as a leader to

resolve conflict, as well as a key partner in responding to humanitarian crises and the results of natural disasters. Therefore, both SOUTHCOM and SOCSOUTH like to point to Fuerzas Comando as an example of positive American engagement with Latin America.

As might be imagined with a competition focused on core SOF skills, the eight days of the event comprise a series of physically and mentally grueling, intensive challenges in areas such as weapons usage, aquatic skills, and tactical capabilities. The two major competitions are the Assault Team Competition and the Sniper Team Competition, with each participating nation sending a judge, a five-person special operations assault team, and a two-man sniper team to compete. As an aside, one of the key ingredients to the success of a Fuerzas Comando competition is that the host nation has to make sure that the venue has the necessary kinds of terrain (rivers, lakes, cliff faces for rappelling, etc.) and facilities (helicopter landing zones, obstacle courses, weapons ranges).

Good planning and a proper venue make Fuerzas Comando a genuine challenge for the participants. SOF aviation units, including the resources of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) and Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), allow Fuerzas Comando participants to closely replicate real-world combat conditions, especially



ABOVE: Special operations team members participating in the Fuerzas Comando competition at Lake Pastrana in Nilo, Colombia, July 27, 2014.

CENTER: A member of the Dominican Republic special operations team navigates his way through one of 10 obstacles in the Fuerzas Comando 2014 final event, July 29, at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia.

ABOVE FAR RIGHT: U.S. and Colombian parachutists jump out of a C-130 aircraft from an altitude of 15,000 feet as part of an international military free fall jump in Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, July 30 as part of Fuerzas Comando 2014. An aircraft from the West Virginia Air National Guard supported the free fall jump.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: Members of a Jamaican special operations team row their raft across Lake Pastrana, Colombia, to get to the next station of the Fuerzas Comando aquatics event, July 27, 2014.

“fast roping” and rapid launch and recovery of personnel, vehicles, and rubber boats. The Assault Team Competition consists of a physical fitness test; confidence course; close quarters combat; a rucksack march; a water event; and an obstacle course. The sniper team competition, always a matter of pride with every nation, consists of a physical fitness test; marksmanship; shoot and move; range estimation; and stalk and shoot events. It often comes down to a tense final round of shooting, with only one or two shots separating the top teams. This is a serious competition, with bragging rights and reputations on the line. And while the United States won a number of the early competitions, America is by no means a “sure thing” in 2015.

A major goal of the skills challenge is to forge a better understanding of other nations’ tactics and responses while fine-tuning Americans’ own SOF tactics, techniques, and procedures. It is no secret that one of the benefits of all the SOF training and support directly provided to

Colombia in the last decade was that it provided the necessary skills and knowledge that helped break the back of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC) in several legendary operations. Overall the Fuerzas Comando exercise helps promote military-to-military relationships, enhance trust and confidence, increase interoperability, and improve regional security. And these activities are key in implementing the stated goals of McRaven and Obama to build a global SOF network to provide a common standard of special operations capability and capacity worldwide.

A look at the past winners of Fuerzas Comando says a great deal about the rise of regional SOF units and their capabilities in Latin America. Colombia has won the exercise six times in the last 10 competitions, and continues to look like a winner in 2015. The Fuerzas Comando competition in 2012 was especially significant: It was the first time Canada had ever participated, and it was the first time that a female SOF operator from Mexico competed.

The CTFP takes place simultaneously with the special operations skills competition of Fuerzas Comando. CTFP is designed to bring together senior military and government leadership throughout the Western Hemisphere to discuss regional, transnational issues such as fighting organized crime, weapons control, the smuggling of drugs, humans, and intellectual property, and combating the drug cartels. Like its military counterpart, it is designed to hone skills on a senior leadership level. Likewise, participants promote political engagement on an international level. The 2015 edition of the Fuerzas Comando CTFP will take place on the island of Aruba in the Caribbean, which is being specially secured to protect the numerous high-ranking officials and SOF professionals planning to attend.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT. WILLIAM OROZCO FANFAN

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. ANGEL MARTINEZ



Fuerzas Comando – 2014

For all the great things represented by Fuerzas Comando, what happened in 2014 is an object lesson about the realities of the 21st century. Fuerzas Comando 2014 was originally planned as an international SOF tour-de-force, and was to be hosted by SOUTHCOM/SOCSOUTH at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. It was to have been the largest gathering of nations for Fuerzas Comando since the “SOF rodeo” concept was first thought of back at the turn of the 21st century. Unfortunately, fiscal reality in the United States reared its ugly head in the form of the Budget Control Act (BCA). Also known

as “sequestration,” the BCA is a federal budget control measure designed to hold the budget deficit down, with mandatory and automatic fiscal limits imposed upon the various federal departments and agencies. And this is where Fuerzas Comando 2014 began to get into trouble.

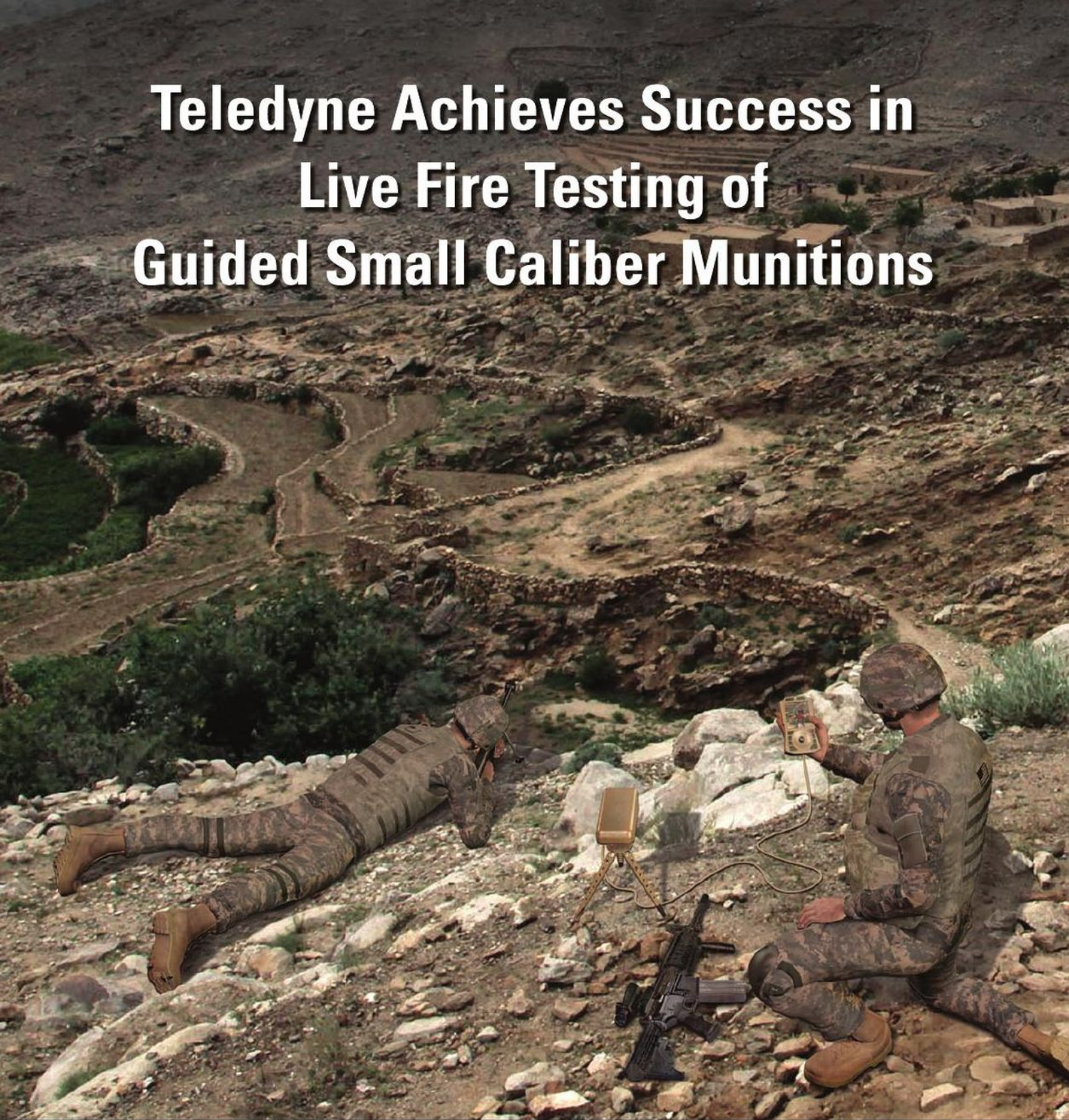
When SOUTHCOM Commander Gen. John Kelly began to consider his options to meet his BCA-mandated cuts, his “best bad options” all centered upon his planned fiscal year 2014 joint and international exercises and engagements in Latin America. Some, like the annual Panama Canal defense exercise called PANAMAX, were downsized and turned into tabletop command post exercises. But others, like the annual deployment of a U.S. Navy hospital ship to visit sites throughout the region, had to be canceled outright. One of these engagements was the planned hosting of Fuerzas Comando at Fort Sam Houston. As soon as the SOUTHCOM/SOCSOUTH staff became aware of this fiscal reality, they rapidly dialed back their plans and began to consider an alternative partner country to host Fuerzas Comando 2014.

Fortunately, one of America’s best regional partners in the SOUTHCOM AOR – Colombia – was able to salvage Fuerzas Comando 2014. Colombia was in an excellent position to provide a fairly permissive threat environment to host Fuerzas Comando 2014 and to provide the necessary infrastructure and support needed to run the event. Also, having won the event regularly over the past decade, Colombia was a good bet to win again in 2014.

When the 17 international teams for Fuerzas Comando 2014 arrived in Colombia, they found a venue with exactly what they needed for a world-class SOF competition. There was lots of water space to support the aquatic portions of the competition, along with excellent shooting ranges, shoot houses, towers, and other facilities. And



Teledyne Achieves Success in Live Fire Testing of Guided Small Caliber Munitions



TSI-0822

For more information, please visit our website.

www.teledyne-si.com



TELEDYNE
SCIENTIFIC & IMAGING
Everywhere you look™





LEFT: Members of the Suriname special operations team celebrate after completing the grueling Fuerzas Comando aquatics event at Nilo, Colombia, July 28, 2014.

TOP: A member of a Honduran special operations team fires during a hostage scenario as part of the stress event during the Fuerzas Comando competition at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, July 27, 2014.

ABOVE: Members of the Trinidad and Tobago special operations team descend from rappel lines during the first part of the Fuerzas Comando stress test event at Fort Tolemaida, Colombia, July 28, 2014.

those facilities were put to good use. Much of the Fuerzas Comando skills competition involves forced marches with heavy loads, which must be moved just prior to simulated assaults. These evolutions are run in rapid succession, usually by nearly exhausted SOF professionals on the edge of their already impressive endurance.

At the end of every Fuerzas Comando competition is an event deeply enjoyed by all the participants: an international parachute jump for all who wish to participate. As most SOF professionals would agree, there is not much in the world that is more fun than jumping out of a perfectly good airplane, and Fuerzas Comando uses this event to mark the end of the competition. It is an appropriate end to what each year is becoming a larger and more popular event throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Fuerzas Comando – 2015 and Beyond

The SOF communities of 27 nations in the Western Hemisphere are preparing to come together this summer for Fuerzas Comando 2015. This year's edition is presently planned to be held in central Guatemala, and looks

to be one of the tightest competitions in recent years. Colombia, which has won four of the last five Fuerzas Comando competitions, including 2014, is going to work hard to defend its record and championship. But the United States, which came in second in 2014, has also been working hard for the top spot this coming year. It's also not unlikely that the SOF units of Guatemala will finish near the top of the leaderboard when Fuerzas Comando 2015 is completed.

Guatemala, like Colombia following the bloody hunt for drug kingpin Pablo Escobar in the 1990s, has committed itself to developing a world-class SOF community, having itself faced the murderous specter of transnational organized crime (TNOC) and the drug smuggling trade within the country. Following the template laid down by cooperation between the United States and Colombia over the past two decades, it hopes to force TNOC operations to give their country a wide berth, as the drug cartels try to move their products north into Mexico and the United States. Given the impressive growth and training of its SOF forces in the past few years, that goal may well be in sight. By hosting Fuerzas Comando 2015, Guatemala hopes to show the rest of the world that it is a serious player in the dangerous world we live in today. ■

AFSOC AT 25:

By John D. Gresham

Busy Before Birth

LIKE THE OTHER PARTS OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM), Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) has had a long and distinguished heritage but traveled a sometimes rocky road on the way to becoming a service component command in 1990. The history of Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) might be said to have begun in October 1943 with the Special Flight Section of the 12th Air Force's 5th Bombardment Wing in North Africa, whose aircrew flew specially modified bombers into occupied Europe. The 801st Bomb Group, the Carpetbaggers, flew similar missions from England in modified bombers as well as a variety of other aircraft, dropping agents and supplies in Axis-held territory, picking up agents and



downed aircrew, and performing other clandestine missions. In the China/Burma/India Theater, the Air Commandos flew combat and support missions deep behind enemy lines with transports, fighters, bombers, light planes, gliders, and helicopters, performing the first Army Air Force night airfield seizure as well as the first combat rescue with a helicopter. All these units, however, disappeared at the end of the war. The first major attempt to regenerate these capabilities came during the Korean War (1950-53). The Air Force activated three wings of the Air Resupply and Communication (ARC) Service to fly transports, medium bombers, flying boats, and several different types of helicopters on unconventional warfare and counterinsurgency operations as well as combat search and rescue missions. With the signing of the armistice, however, the Air Force shut down all its special operations forces (SOF) units.

DOD PHOTOS



LEFT: An MC-130E Combat Talon II aircraft flying low-level maneuvers over the Arizona desert near Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in 1980. The aircraft was assigned to the 8th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) at Hurlburt Field, Florida. **ABOVE:** Rangers parachute into Grenada from MC-130s of the 1st Special Operations Wing (SOW).

The Air National Guard took over the AFSOF mission from the mid to late 1950s until the regular Air Force re-established the Air Commandos at Hurlburt Field, Florida, in the early 1960s. AFSOF evolved and expanded along with the nation's commitment in Southeast Asia, growing to a force of 550 aircraft and 19 squadrons by 1968. But again, as the commitment in Southeast Asia wound down, so did most of the AFSOF capability, except for the 1st Special Operations Wing (SOW) at Hurlburt, the Reserve 919th Special Operations Group (SOG) at nearby Duke Field, and a few active-duty squadrons scattered overseas. In little more than a decade, however, that cycle of boom and bust would change permanently, and for the better.

AFSOF Before 1990

Like the rest of the SOCOM component commands, AFSOF draws much of its reason for being from the Desert One disaster during Operation Eagle Claw in April 1980. Intended to free a large number of American hostages held by the revolutionary government in Tehran, Iran, at the American Embassy, the operation went horribly wrong in the middle of a spring dust storm at a small landing strip south of the city. First the mission had been aborted due to helicopter mechanical failures. Then a ground collision between one of the Navy RH-53D helicopters and a USAF EC-130 tanker transport led to a fire and explosion that killed eight American personnel, destroyed both aircraft, and demonstrated just how unready the United States was for the coming wars against radical terrorism.

In the short term, however, the Air Force special operators finally found a home for themselves, of sorts.

BUILT FOR TODAY'S MISSIONS ...AND TOMORROW'S VICTORIES

For over 20 years Wing's first in the field innovative use of polyurethane and pioneering new technology have led to the development of sponsons and boats that are lighter, longer lasting and better looking which out perform our competition.



The patent pending design of the P-Series [P4.2, P4.7, P5.3 and P5.8] results in a lighter boat with superior performance



WING

I N F L A T A B L E S

Designed Smarter. Built Tougher

Contact: 707.826.2887 • WWW.WING.COM

Cooley Wing uses fabric coated with Coolthane®— an advanced polyurethane coating manufactured by Cooley.
50 Esten Avenue, Pawtucket, RI 02860 • 1-800-333-3048 • www.cooleygroup.com

All Wing Polyurethane Products are Buy American Act and Berry Amendment Compliant



An MC-130E from the 711th SOS, 919th SOW, Duke Field, Florida, drops the last operational 15,000-pound BLU-82 bomb at the Utah Test and Training Range on July 15, 2008. Eleven BLU-82s were dropped during Operation Desert Storm by MC-130s of the 8th SOS.

Having languished after Vietnam within the Tactical Air Command, or TAC – the progenitor of Air Combat Command (ACC) – the various pieces of Air Force special warfare units were gathered into a new command. Formed in December 1982, the 23rd Air Force at Scott Air Force Base (AFB), Illinois, provided a command structure for the special warfare units, along with combat search and rescue, weather reconnaissance, aerial sampling, and even intercontinental ballistic missile silo security units. And while it was not the ultimate answer for the various special warfare capabilities gathered into the 23rd Air Force, it was a start that began to generate some immediate benefits for the nation.

Its first test came early on the morning of Oct. 23, 1983, when MC-130s led the first drops of the 75th Ranger Regiment onto Port Salinas Airfield on the island of Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury). In addition, EC-130s from the 193rd Special Operations Wing acted as airborne radio stations flying broadcast sorties over the island to let civilians know they were being rescued, and AC-130 gunships provided fire support missions for personnel on the ground facing stiff opposition from local militia and Cuban troops. And while the 23rd Air Force still did not have all of the capabilities that had been available during the late stages of the Vietnam War, it was learning fast and making a case for a more formal U.S. Air Force special warfare community. However, this was not a universally popular idea at the time, especially among some of the top leadership of the U.S. Air Force itself.

By the middle of the 1980s, powerful forces inside Congress were making the opening moves to actually

unify the various service special warfare communities by putting them inside their own Combatant Command. This effort was part of a larger legislative agenda designed to deal with the demonstrated weaknesses of the entire U.S. command and control structure, as shown by Operations Eagle Claw and Urgent Fury. But bureaucracies like the Department of Defense (DOD) are slow to change, and rarely without a fight. The final years of the mid-1980s were a time of vehement argument and resistance from some quarters inside the Pentagon itself to the planned congressional reform of DOD. One of the more obvious and potentially successful attempts came from within the top leadership of the Air Force itself, as they tried to derail various aircraft development and acquisition programs such as the new MH-53 Pave Low helicopter.

Nevertheless, by early 1986, the drive to reform DOD in Congress was moving ahead full speed, and in May, a basic package of legislation was voted on and passed. Called Goldwater-Nichols after its sponsors in the Senate and House respectively, it created the new regional Combatant Command structure the nation has used over the last three decades. In 1987, a follow-up amendment specifically for SOF was passed, today known as Nunn-Cohen. This specifically created U.S. Special Operations Command and its supporting DOD infrastructure, as well as the attendant component commands from each of the services we know today.

The various service component commands were stood up over the next few years, with the 23rd Air Force moving to Hurlburt Field in August 1987, and the non-SOF elements being divested in August 1989. It would take

another year for AFSOC to stand up officially, the last of the three original SOCOM service component commands to do so. That finally occurred on May 22, 1990.

However, breaking world events rarely consult officials in the Pentagon on scheduling, and the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s was no exception. Prior to becoming AFSOC in 1990, 23rd Air Force was engaged in a pair of shooting conflicts in the Persian Gulf (Operations Ernest Will and Prime Chance – 1987/1988) and Panama (Operation Just Cause – 1989/1990). Panama in particular allowed the Air Force SOF community to fully deploy and operate for the first time since Vietnam. The results were impressive. Special Tactics personnel on the ground called in a variety of supporting fire missions, including very accurate gunfire from AC-130s. In many ways, Panama was a final exam for the 23rd Air Force on the last steps of its journey to become AFSOC.

Desert Shield/Desert Storm

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in early August 1990, there was no guarantee that AFSOC and the rest of SOCOM were going to be included in the forces being sent to the Persian Gulf (Operation Desert Shield). U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, openly disliked the SOF community. He called them “Snake Eaters,” and expressed the opinion that he could not trust them to “not start a war on their own.” Notwithstanding this, Schwarzkopf eventually allowed SOCOM forces into the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR) and began to employ them.

Ironically, and on the personal orders of Schwarzkopf, it was 20th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) MH-53J Pave Low SOF helicopters led by then-Lt. Col. Richard Comer that helped fire the opening shots of what became Operation Desert Storm (see article “Pave Low Leaders” in this issue). One of the few Air Force aircraft equipped at the time with the new GPS navigation system, Comer’s Pave Lows led eight Army AH-64 Apache gunships from the 101st Airborne Division (under the command of Lt. Col. Richard Cody) over the Iraqi border to destroy a pair of critical enemy radar sites (Objectives Nebraska and Oklahoma). Just a few days later, on Jan. 21, 1991, an MH-53 crew managed the first and only “save” of a downed allied airman in enemy territory when they picked up Navy Lt. Devon Jones, an F-14 “back seater” shot down by an enemy surface-to-air missile.

Other AFSOC units had their own successes in the weeks ahead, with Special Tactics personnel on the ground calling in precision airstrikes and artillery, along with a variety of other tasks being worked by the command’s various C-130 Hercules-based airframes. MC-130s dropped the biggest bombs of the war, the massive BLU-82 “Daisy Cutters” on enemy positions, along with conducting psychological warfare leaflet drops and broadcasts. And the ubiquitous AC-130s continued their long-standing tradition of delivering the most precise

He called them “Snake Eaters,” and expressed the opinion that he could not trust them to “not start a war on their own.”

and devastating gunfire available onto enemy targets. Sadly, however, one of the big gunships was lost during the Battle of Khafji. Spirit 03 was shot down by enemy fire, resulting in 14 aircrew members killed, the worst single-day casualty count

ever in the history of AFSOC. Despite the loss of Spirit 03, AFSOC crews flew their missions throughout Desert Storm, learning important lessons and developing tactics, techniques, and procedures that would serve them well in the next 25 years.

Legacy – The 1990s, 9/11, and Beyond

AFSOC came out of Desert Storm and remained “off the radar” for much of the next decade. Despite the lack of media coverage, however, AFSOC was working hard to implement the lessons from its early fights in Panama and the Persian Gulf as well as Desert Storm, along with working to bring new capability and capacity into





its forces. This included being one of the joint partners on the new V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor transport aircraft with the Marine Corps. One of the requirements that spawned the Osprey had its origin in Operation Eagle Claw, when a longer-ranged tilt-rotor like the V-22 would have been able to perform the rescue without the need for a forward refueling area like Desert One. AFSOC also spent much of the 1990s working hard to improve the capabilities of its Special Tactics personnel to better communicate and designate targets for precision airstrikes and artillery fire, refining their skills as they operated from Somalia to the Balkans. So when the call to action came on Sept. 11, 2001, AFSOC was ready to make history with its SOCOM brethren.

On Oct. 19, 2001, AFSOC MC-130s dropped a company of the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment onto Osama bin Laden's personal hunting lodge, designated Objective Rhino. Simultaneously, AFSOC Special Tactics Combat Controllers were deployed into northern Afghanistan, attached to Army Special Forces "A-Teams" that were working with insurgent militia forces. Within hours, the Combat Controllers were calling in precision airstrikes with deadly efficiency. In addition, AC-130s were once again delivering devastating precision firepower from above, something they continue to do to this day in Afghanistan. And perhaps most impressively, MC-130 tanker transports conducted some of the most impressive and dangerous in-flight refueling missions in history for the helicopters of the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), along with the MH-53s and HH-60s of AFSOC. These were often conducted in "lights out" conditions less than 500 feet *above ground level* in mountainous terrain, yet in debilitating "high and hot" conditions more than 10,000 feet *above sea level*.

ABOVE: Navy Lt. Devon Jones, left, runs toward the Pave Low that rescued him during Operation Desert Storm. The 20th SOS conducted the first combat search and rescue mission since the Vietnam War. **RIGHT:** U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command Combat Controller Bart Decker rides an Afghan horse in Afghanistan in the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom.



COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FOR SENSITIVE MISSIONS



COMMUTER AIR TECHNOLOGY IS A PROVEN PROVIDER OF AIRBORNE INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR) SYSTEMS AND SERVICES.

We are highly experienced combat veterans delivering mission essential and fail-safe solutions. We specialize in systems integrations, operational testing and evaluation, combat mission support, ISR training and exercise support.



CommuterAirTechnology

AGC AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

www.commuterair.com



Florida Institute of Technology
High Tech with a Human Touch™

WISDOM WARRIOR

★ PROGRAM ★

Exceptional Leaders Deserve an Exceptionally Affordable Education

The Wisdom Warrior Program makes our high-quality master's degree programs affordable for the men and women who serve our country in all branches of the military.

We offer a tuition cap of \$250 per credit hour for all active-duty service members. Military spouses are eligible for a 10% tuition discount.

Save up to 100% off the cost of tuition

If you choose to use your *Military Tuition Assistance* in conjunction with our Wisdom Warrior Program.



To learn more and download a brochure, visit:
info.fit.edu/wisdom-warrior

Florida Institute of Technology is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097; (404) 679-4501) to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist and doctoral degrees. Florida Institute of Technology is certified to operate by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Florida Institute of Technology is approved by the Maryland State Higher Education Commission and may be additionally approved by Maryland State Approval Authority for payment of veterans education benefits. Florida Institute of Technology does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, protected veterans status or any other discrimination prohibited by law in the admission of students, administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, employment policies, and athletic or other university sponsored programs or activities. Florida Tech has a right to discontinue the program at any time.

OC-104-215





Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr. (foreground) keeps a watchful eye for insurgents or threats to his operational detachment team during one of many patrols he took part in while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Air Force Cross winner is one of the many Special Tactics airmen who have distinguished themselves over the years.

While AFSOC units and personnel were working hard in Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF-A), there were other commitments they were serving. One of the more substantial ones was Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P). Targeted against the Abu Sayyaf insurgent group in the southern Philippine archipelago, OEF-P was an extremely successful joint international counterterrorism/counterinsurgency campaign run through Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, which was just recently shut down this year.

Just 18 months after the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, AFSOC was tasked to fight another war in Iraq, this time called Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The largest SOF operation in history, OIF began in March 2003 with simultaneous maritime, air, and land operations throughout Iraq. Once again, the capabilities demonstrated in Afghanistan were put to use, particularly for the Special Tactics ground personnel, who regularly called in “danger close” air, missile, and artillery strikes in the nick of time. Perhaps AFSOC’s most impressive job during the initial stages of OIF was the transport and support of the combined 10th/3rd Special Forces Group that worked with the Kurdish Peshmerga forces to move into northern Iraq. Badly outnumbered and very dependent upon the Air Force Combat Controllers for precision airstrikes, the small force under then-Col.

Charles Cleveland swept 16 Iraqi divisions from northern Iraq, liberating both the oilfields and several large cities.

The dozen years since the initial invasion of Iraq have been busy ones for AFSOC. Always the consummate “quiet professionals,” AFSOC has discreetly been conducting operations while reorganizing, along with adding new capabilities for the fights ahead. Several years ago, AFSOC finally brought the CV-22B variant of the tilt-rotor Osprey into service, and has fully committed to the type, using it around the globe. AFSOC is gradually replacing older C-130 variants with the C-130J for its various other missions, employing “Super Hercs” for tanker/transport, gunship, and psychological warfare broadcasting/communications duties. AFSOC has also acquired and is improving a vast new training range complex at Cannon AFB in New Mexico, after Air Combat Command’s departure from the facility.

Today, AFSOC is very much a force that is multi-tasking. On the one hand, AFSOC continues to quietly and discreetly fight in America’s wars, doing so with a growing capacity across a wide set of capabilities on a global scale. At the same time, it is a community that is in the process of both modernizing its aircraft and the technologies in them, and building the infrastructure necessary for what it will be asked to do in the middle of the 21st century. ■



Interview with Command Chief Master Sgt. Matthew M. Caruso

Senior Enlisted Advisor, Air Force Special Operations Command

By John D. Gresham

You have been in the U.S. Air Force since 1987, and have more than 5,000 flight hours in transport aircraft like the C-5 Galaxy and C-130 Hercules. What do all those years and that experience tell you about what you need to do today at AFSOC as the senior enlisted advisor?

Having been an Air Force maintenance airman and then a career enlisted aviator on conventional and SOF [special operations forces] platforms, I think it certainly prepared me for leadership challenges of today and in the last few years. Having a humble foundation as a maintainer and also traveling around the world and the Air Force in the first half of my career gave me an excellent perspective on how it really takes the entire team to get the mission done. Today, myself, my boss, and the command realize just how critical the entire DOD [Department of Defense] is to the success of SOF and how we execute our mission with precision anytime, anyplace. I believe the other piece of gained perspective is that I had to really work hard, study, and persevere to follow my dream to become an Air Commando. Once I received an assignment to the MC-130P and the 9 SOS [Special Operations Squadron], I felt right at home and tried to do the very best I could to accomplish the mission as a flight engineer and take care of people and the unit as an Air Force NCO [non-commissioned officer]. Those years in the Combat Shadow and many of my leaders were instrumental in helping me be prepared to lead our AFSOC airmen of today. I can only hope to do the best I can for them.

AFSOC has changed a great deal since you entered the force in the late stages of the Cold War. What are the biggest changes you have seen from a personnel standpoint during your career?

As an Air Force, we are the smallest we have ever been but by far the busiest and most tasked. The Air Force and AFSOC are so very different than [in] years past. While we still hold dear the competencies and culture that got us through tough times in our history, airmen continue to answer the nation's call whenever and wherever they are needed. Incredibly, but not surprising, I feel that the Air Force is stronger in character, commitment, and loyalty than ever before as well. This is nothing new to

SOF units as we typically thrive when faced with challenges and adversity. We are small, light, and lean and like it that way. However, based on the things we see and what we hear from the families and airmen in AFSOC, we are certainly stretched thin in a few areas of AFSOC. The key is to figure out how to balance mission, home station training requirements, family, and personal time in our lives. The commanders and all the command chiefs and SELs [senior enlisted leaders] spend a lot of time focusing on balance and wellness of the force. Much of this has to do with prioritizing and slowing down enough to be more deliberate in our day-to-day decisions, in my view.

In the last 15 years, the Combat Controller community within AFSOC has developed a truly awesome reputation across the entire U.S. special warfare community. What has been your view of this community's rise in pre-eminence, and its finally being given a combat wing – the 24th Special Operations Wing (SOW) – of its own?

It speaks to the level of competence and professionalism of the Special Tactics community in the special operations battlefield. These Special Tactics [ST] airmen; Combat Controllers, Special Operations Pararescuemen, Special Operations Weathermen, and Tactical Air Control Party airmen have proven the value of integrating air power in the ground battlespace with precision and courage. The growth of the Special Tactics community and stand-up of the 24 SOW showcases the incredible demand for these ground special operators within the Air Force. For example, in May, the 17th Special Tactics Squadron, which supports the 75th Ranger Regiment, will have been at war continuously for 5,000 days. To me, that says the rest of the military sees how valuable we are, and as awareness grows, the demand for Special Tactics will grow. The next step is to focus on growing more ST airmen into leaders as we are very young in rank and leadership experience in the ST NCO corps. There is a lot of development to do in this area to grow our ST teammates and retain them past 10 years in service. That goes back to my previous point about balance in our lives. All these young airmen know is deployment after deployment. Retainability of our best and brightest will

continue to be an issue if we do not address this with the ST community from a strategic perspective.

During your career, what improvements have you seen from a "quality of life" standpoint (base housing, base shopping facilities, schools, etc.) at AFSOC bases around the world?

AFSOC has always placed significant importance on the health and welfare of our Air Commandos – it's essential for our success. One example is that for the first time in over 50 years, AFSOC has all new housing areas going up at Hurlburt Field [Florida] and Cannon AFB [New Mexico]. It's been incredible to watch these wonderful neighborhoods go up so our airmen and their families have a modern, spacious, and safe place to live on base. Another example would be the introduction of 24/7 access to fitness centers and other work-out facilities at both our wings and for our overseas airmen as well. After Air Force completed a study validating their use, AFSOC immediately implemented the 24/7 concept and it has been a huge success. Secondly, we know that food helps make the airman. In 2015, Hurlburt Field won the Air Force Hennessy Trophy for best Food Service Operation for the Eastern United States and Europe – the third time in the last five years. Additionally, Cannon AFB is currently restructuring their food service operation to be more like a campus. The transformed delivery model will provide a wider selection of dining locations and menu options. We expect that to be in place October 2015. I could go on and on, but the bottom line is AFSOC is steadfast on creating an environment for all our airmen and families to thrive. There is much work to do in this area however.

Since 9/11, AFSOC operational tempos have remained near wartime maximums, despite the intended drawdowns and operational terminations in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. How have the personnel within AFSOC held up in your view, along with their dependents? And do you have any ideas on how to improve the duration and quality of "dwell time" between deployments?

Yes, there have been drawdowns; however, as the lead air component for USSOCOM [U.S. Special Operations Command], AFSOC assets will always be in high demand. SOF airmen will continue to be tasked to support the challenging missions our country demands of us; this has a direct impact on our airmen and their families.

In 2012, after years of continual deployments, our people reported they were being pulled in too many directions, had zero predictability in schedules, and lacked time to accomplish all their tasks and training. To alleviate some of these issues, as a command we adopted a unit rotation model that among other things tailors support to deploying/redeploying airmen and their families.

You specifically asked how our personnel are holding up, but we don't accept just "holding up!" To this end, we've implemented a full spectrum of resilience programs – workshops, training, pre- and post-deployment activities – using all the traditional Air Force helping agencies. In



Air Force Special Operations Command Command Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Caruso speaks to a group of airmen at an open forum during his tour of the Airman Leadership School June 12, 2014, at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. Caruso made a point to interact with as many Cannon Air Commandos as possible during his visit.

addition, our SOF warriors and their families benefit from USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Family [POTFF] initiatives. We have some of the most amazing and resilient airmen serving in AFSOC and their families are simply the best – we owe them better than "holding up."

As for your final question, we closely monitor "dwell time" and put processes in place to allow downtime with families between deployments as well as time to train and regenerate before deployment. In AFSOC, we take into consideration time away for deployment; however, for our members, if you're not home – whether for training, deployment prep, temporary duty, or any other reason – you're still not home. So, using the SOCOM model, we track and closely monitor any reason that would keep an airman from resting his or her head on their own pillow at night.

The USSOCOM Standard Dwell time is 1:1 – one day home for each day deployed. Ultimately, we're also keenly aware that we need to do everything possible to take care of them now and into the future. Lastly, I am personally asking all commanders and SEAs [senior enlisted advisors] in AFSOC to watch our airmen's leave balances very closely to ensure our people are taking their leave and getting their downtime. In many cases, we are addicted to combat and forget that we must slow down to go fast sometimes.



Throughout DOD, post-deployment health issues, both mental and physical, have been plaguing personnel returning from combat zones around the world. How big a problem is this for AFSOC, and what do you feel needs to be done to better support the personnel in your command that “need help”?

We take the health and well-being of our people very seriously, but AFSOC is not “plagued” with health issues in our personnel returning from combat. Of course, we have a high opstempo, and some of our people – especially our battlefield airmen – sustain injuries in the normal performance of their duties. With the implementation of the Preservation of the Force and Family initiative, and with the assistance of SOCOM and the AFMS [Air Force Medical Service], we have brought more medical and mental health resources to bear. The result is that we have a robust system that takes care of our folks whether they are at home or anywhere around the world.

For the new enlisted personnel coming into AFSOC, what do you tell them about their lives and careers ahead when you get the chance to talk to them?

When I get a chance to talk to new enlisted personnel, I tell them to have pride in every aspect of their job. They are part of an elite joint team, and should take pride in that, every time they put on their uniform and do their part for the mission. Be proud to be an airman in the Air Force and one that executes and supports the mission of USSOCOM. Our mission, to “organize, train, and equip airmen to execute global special operations” is a no-fail

mission. I need our new enlisted personnel to understand teamwork and how they fit into the big picture and how critically important they are to the mission. I also ask them to be quiet professionals and remember to always bring credit and honor to themselves and their units and take care of each other in all things.

One of the initiatives that has been coming down from SOCOM has been the vital importance of continuing education and training, particularly for enlisted personnel. What initiatives have you seen AFSOC adopting to support this mandate, and how important is it in your opinion as the command’s top enlisted advisor?

The FY 15-18 USSOCOM Commander’s Training and Education Guidance [CTEG] states NCO education remains a top priority. AFSOC has designated an O-6-level lead to USSOCOM for education, Dr. Julie Crutchfield, who monitors our status towards meeting the goals set forth in the CTEG. Dr. Crutchfield also oversees AFSOC’s Community College of the Air Force [CCAF] Affiliated School progress and status. She chairs the CCAF Affiliated Schools Advisory Panel and is a member of the CCAF Policy Council. She works closely with Mrs. Alicia Spurling, AFSOC’s Language, Regional Education and Culture program manager. AFSOC’s status towards meeting the education goals contained in the CTEG is going very well, considering the guidance was not published until December 2014. The status of each goal is addressed below:

- Components and JSOU [Joint Special Operations University] will continue to identify and develop education programs that support our NCOs as they earn credits needed for completing degrees, while continually exploring opportunities for increased SOF-centric education:

All AFSOC enlisted members can work towards the associate degree programs offered by CCAF. We are taking advantage of expanded opportunities to attend courses offered by JSOU and have provided inputs to rank the topics we would like to see added or expanded. Enlisted personnel can earn either lower-level credit transferable to CCAF or upper-level credit applicable to a bachelor’s degree when they complete Command Education Program courses offered online and in residence by JSOU. AFSOC-affiliated schools attended primarily by enlisted members currently teach 41 courses that award a combined 223 semester hours of SOF-centric credit. AFSOC also has a strong enlisted professional development program and offers John C. Maxwell courses on a monthly basis. Additionally, an AFSOC-enlisted aviator was competitively selected to attend the SOF-centric master’s program taught by National Defense University at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a first for the command.

- Foreign Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Education and Training:

AFSOC teaches five regional courses, two culture courses, and nine different languages, with potential to expand, if required. The command’s language proficiency goals for FY 15 are for 50 percent of personnel in language coded billets to achieve the 1/1/1 level. By Feb. 15, 65 percent were level 1/1/1 and 29 percent were level 2/2/2. Additional members are currently in language training, which should bring our 1/1/1 total to 81 percent by the end of the fiscal year.

- The academic degree goal for NCOs is to earn a bachelor's degree by the grade of E-9 [chief master sergeant]. Over 62 percent of AFSOC's chief master sergeants have a bachelor's degree. 100 percent have an associate degree and nearly 22 percent have earned master's degrees. Over 98 percent of the lieutenant colonels have their master's degrees. AFSOC leads all of the components in meeting the degree goals for both enlisted personnel and officers.

From your point of view, what things do you feel AFSOC, SOCOM, and DOD need to invest in to ensure that the personnel base of the command remains solid over the next several decades? What do you feel AFSOC needs to ask for to make sure that the "human capital" is properly taken care of?

I want to point out that our first Special Operations Forces Truth is that humans are more important than hardware. Our people are, and will always be, our greatest asset. Without our Air Commandos, we can't conduct our mission. What we need to continue to invest in to make sure that the "human capital" is properly taken care of is an environment that promotes resiliency and enhanced individual development in areas such as education and promotion opportunities. We also give our personnel the opportunity for balance within their personal lives.

You've had a long career with lots of flight time and experience. What were the best of times that you experienced? And what were the toughest challenges?

The absolute best time, when it comes to mission, was flying operations in OEF [Operation Enduring Freedom] and OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom]. I would say that going into the war, we weren't exactly sure what to expect, but even though those first few years of deployments were very tough, it was some of the most challenging yet rewarding time for me and my teammates in the MC-130P, as well as all AFSOC platforms. The camaraderie and flying was the best and we were being asked to do so much for the joint SOF team. The toughest challenge was losing teammates along the way ... whether it is my aircrew brothers or operators from AFSOC or one of the other components; it never gets easier. In SOF, we are family, and losing one of our own regardless of your tribe or service is personal. Those were the toughest times and they still are.

For you personally, is AFSOC still "fun" for you to work and serve within? Or are there different metrics for someone like yourself with a career spanning decades for why you have "stayed in?"

I stay in because I love to serve. They say if you do something you like, you never work a day in your life. It's true. I really feel that my real job is taking care of airmen and making sure that everyone treats each other with dignity and respect. I know I'm doing my job if I'm working hard for my airmen and their families, improving resiliency, giving time and predictability back to their lives, and ensuring a safe and secure



Chief Master Sgt. Matthew Caruso responds to questions May 12, 2014, in his first interview as the "senior sergeant" for the command. He returned to Hurlburt Field for his new job after recent posts at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, and Bagram Air Base Afghanistan, and a tour in the Republic of Korea.

environment. Also, I think we have to recognize that as SELs, it's not about us; it's about our service and giving back to those that will follow in our footsteps and lead the men and women of tomorrow. I walk into work every day with a smile on my face because I have the best job in the Air Force.

As you serve in what will likely be your final assignment in the U.S. Air Force, what is your "from the flight line" view of AFSOC, especially from a personnel standpoint, as it begins to move into the middle of the 21st century?

Here is my assessment of how we are doing with creating an environment for our airmen and families to thrive ... and I spend a lot of time on this area. We are doing well but there is much room for improvement. "Well" lends itself to average, and we never want to be average in anything we do. We want to be awesome ... all around. Our people are crushing the mission ... as will always be the case, but are we crushing our people as well? I don't think we are, but the jury is still out. I am hearing and seeing good things and I think we are on the right track. The commander and I, the HQ staff, and the command teams have only been at our strategic action plan for about six good months. We continue to drive to realize our vision of how to better prioritize taskings, lead our people, and manage our resources in order to have an elite, well-balanced, healthy, and content force. Until that day comes, we - all leaders - will work day and night to take care of this command and its airmen. ■

QUALITY, RESPONSIVENESS & INTEGRITY

**WHEN OUR SHARKS CIRCLE,
IT'S A GOOD THING.**



It has been almost five years and over 100,000 flight hours since the **TigerShark UAS** accepted the role of ISR and IED special operations. This UAS aircraft was originally designed and has since been manufactured by NASC under contract to the US Navy.

WWW.NASC.COM

 **NASC**
NAVMAR APPLIED SCIENCES CORPORATION



Iconic AFSOC Aircraft

By Robert F. Dorr

CARTER HARMAN TOOK THE JOB TO BE NEAR HIS MOTHER.

The R-4B Hoverfly was built in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Harman was a newly minted second lieutenant, a pilot and a Connecticut boy to the core, eager to snap up a proffered assignment to the Sikorsky factory. He was just another Army pilot, Harman thought, but as soon as he wrote "R-4B" in his logbook, they told him he was going to be an Air Commando.

"I didn't know what that meant," said Harman. "And can you guess what they told me next?"

They told Harman they were sending him to Burma.

"I can't say I 'got' the significance of rotary-wing immediately," said Harman. He was interviewed a decade ago after not talking with anyone about his experience since immediately after the war.

A common characteristic of many special operations aircraft is the ability to sneak in and out of tight places in a hurry – often called short takeoff and landing (STOL) capability. No aircraft does STOL better than a helicopter.

The voices of airmen in Air Force Special Operations Command's (AFSOC) history make up the bedrock of this narrative about iconic flying machines operated by the command and its predecessors. This will be a quick look only, and will by necessity leave out many other iconic aircraft others will argue should have been included. The World War II Air Commandos in Burma alone, however, had almost enough unusual aircraft types to fill a volume of *Jane's All The World's Aircraft*. Think of the bloated C-46 Commando cargo ship touching down on a semi-paved strip and being swallowed up by surrounding elephant grass. Or a UC-64 Norseman utility plane touching down near enemy troops where there's no pavement at all.

The 1st Air Commando Group, led by Philip G. Cochran and John Alison, both lieutenant colonels, flew C-47 Skytrains, P-51A Mustangs, B-25 Mitchells, and other heavy iron. They introduced the L-1 Vigilant liaison plane. All of the wartime aircraft were tailored for

unorthodox missions, carried out by special operators with extraordinary courage. From that point of view, Harman's ungainly R-4B helicopter was just one more odd bird in an unconventional flock.

The Sikorsky R-4B was a box-shaped machine with a 180-horsepower engine and a 38-foot main rotor. Former Staff Sgt. Jim Phelan, who was Harman's crew chief, described it this way: "Imagine a jungle gym on a children's playground. Now, cover it up with canvas. Now, take your kitchen eggbeater and attach it to the top. You have some metal, some fabric, and a lot of motion as the thing tries to tear itself apart." The metal frame of the R-4B was actually covered with a layer of thin linen, but crews routinely called it canvas.

In 1944, arrangements were made to send four R-4Bs to Burma to assist in rescue efforts.

The helicopters were to augment L-1 Vigilant and L-5 Sentinel lightplanes that frequently landed behind the lines to rescue troops separated from their units.

On April 21, 1944, an L-1 rescued three British soldiers behind Japanese lines but crashed, still behind the lines. Pilot Sgt. Ed Hladovcak, known as "Murphy," and the three soldiers sought cover in a rice paddy. An L-5 found them but could not land in vegetated terrain crisscrossed by paddy fields and surrounded by slopes. The L-5 made a low-level pass and dropped a handwritten message to Hladovcak: "MOVE UP MOUNTAIN. JAPANESE NEARBY." A radio call went out for Harman.

The toughest part of the rescue for Harman was the 600-mile solo trip from Lalaghat to "Aberdeen," a temporary airstrip in Burma deep inside Japanese territory. Part of the journey involved crossing over high mountain peaks, a challenge for the underpowered helicopter. The YR-4B had a range of only about 150 miles, so Harman had to carry a supply of gas in jerry cans and stop several times to refuel.

Once at Aberdeen, Harman was guided to "Murphy" by an L-5.

On April 24, Harman reached the downed quartet and began hauling the men to safety. Since the R-4B could carry only its pilot and one other, it took Harman most of a day to evacuate the three Britons.

"The final part of the rescue was aimed at Hladovcak," said Harman. "'Murphy' was now alone near his crash site. He was signaling, trying to tell me something. I didn't understand the signal, but learned later that he was shouting about Japanese troops bearing down on him. As I approached him, soldiers broke out of the treeline about 1,000 feet from him, some with their rifles held in the air."

Harman landed, picked up Hladovcak, and took off quickly.

Years later, Harman learned that the approaching troops were British long-range raiders known as Chindits rather than Japanese.

The combat search and rescue (CSAR) mission has been on and off the roster of duties assigned to AFSOC and its predecessors – mostly off – throughout the history of unorthodox air operations. The helicopter came and stayed – until 2008. Special operators used some small, underpowered Sikorsky H-5s – the Navy version is remembered as the craft Mickey Rooney flew in the film *The Bridges at Toko-ri* – before acquiring larger flying machines.

Also during Korea, special operators used a Sikorsky H-19 to retrieve the wreckage of a crashed Soviet MiG-15 fighter to be studied by stateside scientific experts. During the Vietnam War, special operations squadrons flew Bell UH-1F single-engine and UH-1N twin-engine Huey helicopters during sensitive, behind-the-lines work. Versions of the H-3 Jolly Green and HH-53 Super Jolly Green appeared during Vietnam but evolved into the MH-53M Pave Low that ultimately became AFSOC's last helicopter. The MH-60G Pave Hawk provided yeoman special ops duties in the 1990s and early 2000s.



OPPOSITE: An R-4B Hoverfly like the one Air Commandos used in the first helicopter rescue.

LEFT: The first special operations gunships might arguably be these B-25H Mitchells of the 1st Air Commando Group, armed with .50-caliber machine guns, 75 mm cannon, and bombs.

Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere King Air 350CER



Bringing new transport capability to the warfighter.

Fixed-wing Utility Aircraft (FUA). Whether it's flying nonstop from California to Hawaii or operating from an unimproved dirt runway in Africa, the King Air® 350CER is a worldwide mission enabler that will bring new capability to the warfighter for the time-sensitive movement of key personnel, with equipment, to or within a theater of war. Beechcraft's King Air 350CER has proven itself in tough, real-world conflict environments and is in production now. Anytime. Anyplace. Anywhere.

U.S. +1.844.44.TXTAV | International +1.316.517.8270 | Beechcraft.com

©2015 Beechcraft Corporation. All rights reserved. Beechcraft and King Air are registered trademarks of the Beechcraft Corporation.

TEXTRON AVIATION



An H-19 used by Air Force special operations in Korea, distinguished from normal SAR H-19s by deletion of "RESCUE" markings and the broad yellow recognition stripe around the fuselage.

Douglas A-1 Skyraider

Fixed-wing aircraft designed during World War II remained a vital part of the special ops inventory long after the arrival of the jet age. Air Commandos went to South Vietnam in 1962 with B-26 Invaders, C-47 Skytrains, and T-28 Trojans. Soon, they began to operate an aircraft that had a distinguished record with the Navy and Marine Corps but had never previously been used by the Air Force, let alone the Air Force's elite, unorthodox-warfare squadrons. By 1964, the Douglas A-1 Skyraider began arriving in Air Commando squadrons in South Vietnam. It had made its first flight two decades earlier and in terms of its design features was very much a creation of World War II, although it didn't get into combat during that conflict.

The men who flew the "Spad" – the new nickname the Skyraider acquired during the Vietnam era – were an irreverent band of mavericks. At first restricted to functioning only as advisers, they took along on each sortie a South Vietnamese observer for political and legal reasons. "We had one guy who was the observer everyone wanted," said retired Col. Charles Vasiliadis of the 602nd Air Commando Squadron. "He could sleep no matter how abruptly you were maneuvering. That meant he wasn't in the way when you carried out your 'adviser' duties by strafing and bombing the Viet Cong."

The Skyraider's Wright R-3350 radial engine belched, trembled, and leaked oil. It also powered the '50s majestic DC-7 and Super Constellation, delivered a hefty

3,250 horsepower, and had the "oomph" to get a pilot out of a tight spot.

But the engine was a maintainer's headache. "They were terrors to work on," said former Airman 1st Class Monty Lawrence, a flight-line mech. "Everything was king-sized and in large numbers – seven nose-mounted magnetos that were practically inaccessible, a carburetor as big as a 15-inch TV set. It took three sturdy young airmen to pull the four-bladed propeller through every morning for preflight. But it was powerful! On a jam acceleration, while in the chocks and an eight-point tiedown on, you'd swear you were going to snap-roll from the torque."

On March 10, 1966, under heavy fire, Maj. Bernard F. Fisher made a high-risk landing in an A-1E to rescue a downed pilot at the besieged A Shau Special Forces camp. Learning of Fisher's courageous act, Lt. Col. Gene Deatrick, newly arrived commander of the 1st Air Commando Squadron, remembered that no airman had yet won the highest American award for valor. On the phone to Col. William McGinty in Saigon, Deatrick proclaimed, "I've got this family man with five kids who doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, and the strongest cuss word he uses is 'Shucks!' He has just pulled off the bravest act of the war. I want to nominate him for the Medal of Honor." President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the medal at the White House. Fisher's A-1E 132649 became the first Medal of Honor aircraft from any war to be preserved and is at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

Deatrick was soon swept into another of the dramatic events of the war. On July 20, 1966, Deatrick was flying over a streambed in Laos when he happened upon a person waving for help. Deatrick directed helicopters to the rescue and learned only months later that the lone figure was Lt. Dieter Dengler, a U.S. Navy Skyraider pilot who had been shot down six months earlier and taken prisoner by the communist Pathet Lao. His rescue by another Spad pilot was extraordinarily good luck.

On Sept. 1, 1968, the commander of the other principal Spad unit, the 602nd Special Operations Squadron (as Air Commando squadrons were re-named that year), Lt. Col. William A. Jones, was covering a rescue when his A-1H was hit. Flames and smoke churned up inside his cockpit. Afire and under fire, Jones remained in the area and pressed the fight. He survived and became the second A-1 pilot to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Though it was only one of the special ops missions assigned to the Air Force Skyraider, many remember the aircraft as "Sandy," the generic term for both pilot and aircraft leading and protecting combat rescue forces behind the lines. The Skyraider kept up its role in the "Sandy" mission until replaced in October 1972 by the Vought A-7D, the Air Force version of the plane the Navy called the Corsair II.

Vietnam was also the beginning of the fixed-wing gunship, beginning with the AC-47 Spooky, a version of the venerable DC-3.

The bulky, ungainly, twin-boom Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar became the next-generation gunship. Twenty-six C-119Gs were converted to become AC-119G Shadows. Over a target, the work of an AC-119 was a challenge to

crew resource management, with the night-observation operator, table navigator, gunners, flight engineer, and pilots all having choreographed duties to perform in unison. The job was especially difficult for the flight engineer, who sat on an inverted can in lieu of a seat, and the gunners, who constantly hefted 132-pound ammunition boxes.

Fairchild converted a second 26-plane batch of C-119Gs into AC-119K Stingers, primarily to hunt trucks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The AC-119G carried four GAU-2/As with 50,000 rounds of ammunition for day operations or 35,000 rounds plus 60 flares for night. The AC-119K retained the mini-guns and added two 20 mm M61 Vulcan cannons.

"The AC-119G was a 'vanilla' airplane with a flare launcher on the left parachute door and a spotlight on the right," said retired Col. John Hope, an AC-119K pilot in Vietnam. "The AC-119K had all those sensors added and even with the boost from the jet engines it often seemed heavy and under-powered. We computed our takeoff data based on an assumption of a climb rate of 100 feet per minute – that's after 'clean up,' tucking in the gear and so on – which is really slow." The final Vietnam-era gunship, the AC-130A/E Spectre, was another derivative of a well-known cargo hauler. Its successors serve in world hot spots today.

Helio U-10 Courier

If the Skyraiders and gunships of the Vietnam era were gruff, leaky, and noisy brutes, the Helio U-10 Courier

An A-1E Skyraider escorts a Sikorsky HH-3C rescue helicopter as it goes to pick up a downed pilot in Vietnam.





A U.S. Air Force AC-119G aircraft of the 17th Special Operations Squadron over Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam, Oct. 29, 1969.

was elegant and classy. The U-10 was, very simply, a remarkable fixed-wing STOL aircraft that became a legend largely due to efforts by the Air Commandos' Lt. Col. Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt.

Aderholt worked at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the 1950s and got the CIA interested in a high-wing, tailwheel-equipped plane with big flaps and an enormous vertical tail. It evolved into the Helio U-10 Courier, sometimes called the Super Courier. Aderholt's biographer, Warren A. Trest, wrote that the Courier could operate from crude airstrips where the De Havilland Beaver and Westland Lysander could not.

Listed as a six-place utility/special operations aircraft, the U-10 was powered by a 395-horsepower Lycoming GO-480 six-cylinder horizontally opposed piston engine. It had a maximum speed of about 180 miles per hour, and – extraordinarily – a minimum speed very close to zero.

Retired Army Maj. Darryl Neidlinger is today the pilot of the first U-10 delivered to the Air Force. It's pulling new duty today with a missionary organization.

"You have to give it your best and most conscientious attention all the way from tie down to tie down," said Neidlinger. "Once you're in motion, the tail doesn't want to stay behind the airplane. You have to use a tremendous amount of brake and rudder to keep the airplane straight.

"Takeoffs and landings can be a challenge," Neidlinger continued. "It's a bear to handle in a crosswind because of that big old giant vertical stabilizer and humongous rudder. It has two to three times the rudder surface area

of a typical light aircraft. That's because you want to operate this airplane at slow speeds, which is what it was designed for. It will fly very handily at 30 miles per hour if you have flaps down."

The Courier's flaps are aerodynamic. "They go down when the aircraft needs lift," Neidlinger said. "The pilot has no control over them. On approach, they come out at 62 miles per hour. They come out with a bang and it's loud."

Retired Air Force Col. Harvey Taffet said the 5th Air Commando Squadron "flew its first Vietnam mission on my birthday, Nov. 23, 1965, over the Ia Drang Valley" – site of the classic battle, that month, between American Air Cavalry men and North Vietnamese regular troops. "We had 30 pilots flying 20 airplanes, but it wasn't a pretty sight. Most groundlooped the airplane at least once." U-10 veterans agree that the aircraft performed well once aloft but was difficult to operate on, and near, an airfield.

The Air Force acquired 100 U-10 Couriers and operated several dozen in Vietnam. After the Air Commandos were redesignated special operations forces in 1967, they flew with the 5th Special Operations Squadron at various locations in South Vietnam. They were used for routine transportation, for special missions behind the lines, and for psychological operations duties with broadcast loudspeakers and propaganda leaflets. During one of the loudspeaker missions, a U-10 pilot persuaded 60 suspected Viet Cong to walk out of a cave and give themselves up.



A U.S. Air Force Helio U-10B Courier (s/n 63-13093) from the 5th Special Operations Squadron in flight over Vietnam in 1969.

Also in Vietnam were special operations helicopters, including the UH-1F Huey, HH-3E Jolly Green Giant, and the HH-53B/C Super Jolly Green. All of these were used for a special ops, trans-border effort known as Pony Express that hauled special operations fighters to and from North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Super Jolly evolved into what became AFSOC's most beloved helicopter and its last – the Pave Low series.

Sikorsky MH-53 Pave Low

The H-53 series of helicopters began with the HH-53B/C Jolly Green Giants of the Vietnam era and morphed into a series of extensively modified, all-weather, special ops aircraft culminating in the MH-53M Enhanced Pave Low IV. Today, when airmen wax nostalgic about these steel chariots, they use the term with which retired Col. Darrel Whitcomb began the Air Force's own official history of the aircraft.

"Pave Low," Whitcomb wrote. "The term itself generates an image: a dark, wispy night; a low, pulsating rumble approaching from the distance. The rumble becomes a presence, a large helicopter that settled onto the ground amidst the deep darkness. Earnest men of determination spew forth from it. Heavily armed, they

quickly set up to collect intelligence, kill enemy troops, rescue downed or isolated friendly personnel, or otherwise conduct a direct action mission. ..."

The H-53's original job in the Air Force was combat rescue. The Air Force became interested after the Marine Corps introduced its CH-53A Sea Stallion transport helicopter, which completed its maiden flight on Oct. 14, 1964.

In November 1966, the Air Force borrowed two CH-53As from the Marines and soon purchased eight combat-rescue HH-53Bs.

The HH-53B made its first flight March 16, 1967, and entered service in October 1967.

In the official history *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia*, Air Force historian Earl H. Tilford, Jr., wrote that the effectiveness of the HH-53B and subsequent HH-53C was undermined at first by inadequate training of crews in air-to-air refueling and other procedures. Tilford wrote:

"The HH-53B/C represented the best in rescue technology, yet there were some limitations in the system. Too large to be an ideal rescue helicopter, its size kept it from maneuvering in tight areas like karst valleys. Its large size and relatively slow speed made it an easy target for enemy gunners."

Tilford's book credits first-generation H-53 helicopters with 371 of the 2,039 combat rescues made in Vietnam. HH-53B/C helicopters participated in the attempt to rescue American prisoners of war in the Son Tay raid



An MH-53 Pave Low helicopter from the 20th Special Operations Squadron conducts a flight near Hurlburt Field, Florida, Aug. 20, 2008. The venerable Pave Low has now been replaced by the CV-22 Osprey.

of November 1970. In 1969, an HH-53B was tested with a night/all-weather rescue system known as Pave Low I, which did not prove successful. The “Pave” designator signifies a program managed by what’s known today as Air Force Materiel Command.

After the Vietnam war came the HH-53H Pave Low II and subsequent versions. Subsequent MH-53J Enhanced Pave Low III models used their terrain-following and global

positioning navigation systems to bring the attack helicopter into position in Task Force Normandy, the joint strike team that opened Operation Desert Storm on Jan. 17, 1991, with a secret, nocturnal attack on Iraqi radar stations.

A flight engineer who asked not to be named because he’s still in AFSOC said that “no other aircraft ever inspired the amount of love the Pave Low did – but it was really a love-hate relationship.” The Air Force



"We called it the 'pizza rack' because it was a huge monstrosity that resembled a pizza oven. It routinely collected leaked oil and hydraulic fluid."

was planning to retire the helicopter after the failed 1980 attempt to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran, known as Operation Eagle Claw. When Navy RH-53D models, lacking modern avionics and navigation gear, couldn't handle the Eagle Claw mission, a series of modifications resulted in a succession of Pave Low models, ultimately the MH-53M Enhanced Pave Low IV.

"It was a great aircraft but it suffered from the familiar problems of added weight and reduced elbow room caused by constant upgrades. We had a hodgepodge of stuff on board, including a cartridge-based mapping system taken from the A-7 Corsair II. A huge avionics rack in the left center of the fuselage, right under the main rotor head, took away a lot of our cabin room and housed the majority of AFSOC-specific mission avionics. We called it the 'pizza rack' because it was a huge monstrosity that resembled a pizza oven. It routinely collected leaked oil and hydraulic fluid."

The Pave Low's last mission was on Sept. 27, 2008, when six helicopters supported special operations forces in Iraq.

Many Pave Low veterans are among the AFSOC crews who now fly the Bell-Boeing CV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft. The Osprey is widely considered, today, to have overcome teething troubles. Ospreys have had key roles in recent operations in Iraq and Libya.

Credible Sport C-130

One of the most bizarre, and seemingly dangerous, aerial creatures designed for STOL capability was a C-130 Hercules modified with lift rockets slanting downward, slowdown rockets facing forward, missile motors facing backward, and still more rockets to stabilize



LEFT: An AC-130U gunship from the 4th Special Operations Squadron flies over the range firing its 105 mm gun during a local training mission on Jan. 27, 2011, at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The AC-130U “Spooky” is one of a long line of gunships, and Hercules variants, to serve AFSOC.

ABOVE: YMC-130H Credible Sport I, firing its take-off rockets during testing.

the aircraft as it touched down. First- and second-generation versions of the C-130 have served heroically with AFSOC, but none was as unusual as the Credible Sport YMC-130H.

“They called it Super STOL,” said a flight engineer close to the Credible Sport project. “And with the nose-wheel off the ground after 10 meters and the entire 140,000-pound aircraft airborne at 150 feet on takeoff, they weren’t messing around.

“Of course,” added the flight engineer, “strapping on more than 30 Mk78/Mk56 rocket motors was what transformed this beast into something special.”

Credible Sport would have been used in a second attempt to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran in 1980 – after the failure of the first provided the impetus for the creation of AFSOC and Special Operations Command.

On April 24, 1980, the United States failed in an attempt to rescue 52 diplomats being held captive at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran. Eight American servicemen lost their lives in Operation Eagle Claw, two burnt-out aircraft had to be left behind, and a sense of gloom fell over the U.S. Congress, press, and public. One long-term consequence was the founding of AFSOC. A shorter-term

reaction yielded a bold plan for a second rescue attempt, built around Credible Sport.

The objective was to land in a Tehran stadium to pick up hostages and to make a short landing a second time on an aircraft carrier deck to deliver them to safety. STOL capability was achieved with extensive modification to the Hercules, including installation of an array of rocket motors.

Credible Sport, first called the XFC-130H and later the YMC-130H, appeared practicable despite a tragic accident, but the second rescue attempt was never made.

The C-130 airframe was familiar to special ops airmen long before Credible Sport and remains so long after. Today, AFSOC is converting to versions based on the second-generation C-130J design. They refuel helicopters. They insert troops behind the lines. They conduct electronic warfare missions and gather electronic intelligence. They have become legendary gunships with extensive modifications and upgrades, some of them catch the eye as being a bit unusual.

But in the long history of special ops aircraft, unusual is not so unusual, after all. AFSOC and its predecessors have been flying remarkable aircraft from their earliest days. ■



Gunship Update

By Scott R. Gourley

APPEARING ON THE "MAJOR COMMAND PRIORITIES" panel at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in February 2015, Lt. Gen. Bradley Heithold, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), addressed the balance between ongoing platform recapitalization and the acquisition of new special operations platforms.

Heithold emphasized that current operational environments do not allow AFSOC to "take a knee and recapitalize" but rather require "maintain[ing] a level of capability and readiness today with my legacy force as we go through this recap effort."

Turning to the command's gunships, he said he was "pretty pleased right now with what I'm seeing on the recap efforts of the AC-130J."

"Most of you know that we're moving to the AC-130J," he said. "I call it the 'ultimate battle plane,' because I'm going to have a 'dial a bomb' capability and I'm going to have guns on it. We're 'upgunning' the aircraft with

a 105 [mm]. It will be an ultimate night CAS [close air support] airplane for special operations."

Lineage

The AC-130J "Ghostrider" traces its lineage back to the original AC-47D (initially designated FC-47D), a gunship conversion of a Douglas C-47D Dakota that carried three 7.62 mm "miniguns" firing through two rear windows and the cargo door on the port side. Heithold's praise for the latest model came just over 50 years after the first test use of an AC-47 in combat, in December 1964.

The Air Force eventually converted 53 C-47s to gunships during the Vietnam War, and lessons learned from the program fed into improved gunship models based on converted Fairchild C-119s and Lockheed C-130s.

OPPOSITE: Capt. Steve Visalli, a flight test engineer with the 413th Flight Test Squadron, boards the newly created AC-130J Ghost Rider in anticipation of its first official sortie Jan. 31, 2014, at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The Air Force Special Operations Command MC-130J arrived at Eglin in January 2013 to begin the modification process for the AC-130J, whose primary mission is close air support, air interdiction, and armed reconnaissance. MC-130J prototypes will be modified as part of a \$2.4 billion AC-130J program to grow the future fleet.

Fast forward a few decades to the Global War on Terrorism, when AFSOC entered the 21st century with a mixed fleet of eight AC-130H "Spectre" gunships and 13 AC-130U "Spooky" gunships. The AC-130H, first deployed in 1972, carries both a 40 mm and 105 mm cannon (20 mm guns that were also carried for a number of years were removed). The AC-130U, first deployed in 1995, carries the 40 mm gun, 105 mm gun, and an additional 25 mm Gatling gun, along with other system improvements.

According to Bill Lane, chief of strike and ISR requirements for Air Force Special Operations Command, AFSOC's gunship fleet is currently assigned to two bases – Hurlburt Field, Florida, and Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico – although deployment information and specific gunship models or quantities at each location are not publicly discussed.

Primary missions for the fleet include close air support (including troops in contact, convoy escort, and urban operations), air interdiction (against both pre-planned targets and targets of opportunity), and force protection (including both air base and facilities defense).

Lane noted that current activities surrounding the AC-130H/AC-130U "legacy fleet" of gunships include ongoing retirement of the AC-130H Spectre component. Four of those aircraft were retired in FY 2014 and the remaining aircraft are slated for retirement by the end of FY 2015.

Interim Capability Enhancements

In parallel with legacy fleet retirement planning, AFSOC has also acquired a dozen AC-130W "Stinger II" platforms.

"That is our latest evolution of the gunship, even though the airframe itself is the same age as the AC-130U," Lane said. "The airframes are between 1987 and 1989 models, but they were just modified again to gunships beginning in 2009."



The aircraft were originally configured as MC-130W "Combat Spear" refuelers, but were reconfigured for gunship duties, renamed "Dragon Spear," and later redesignated as the AC-130W Stinger II in May 2012.

Noting that the Stinger II carries a Precision Strike Package that includes a "mix of guns and precision munitions," Lane described the aircraft as "an interim build for gunships" prompted by operational mandates prior to availability of the future objective AC-130J platforms.

"When Adm. [Eric T.] Olson was the USSOCOM [U.S. Special Operations] commander, he decided to convert the MC-130W, which was a mobility platform, into a gunship, because we needed more [gunships] on the battlefield at the time in the conflicts that we were fighting," he explained.

As part of the fleet expansion, Lane said that a new Precision Strike Package "was developed as the 'next-generation gunship weapon suite,' if you will, and the thought all along was that it would go into whatever platform the next-generation gunship was."

"At the time, back in 2009, they were also looking at the potential of an AC-27, a smaller two-engine gunship," he continued. "That was eventually abandoned, and the C-130J was chosen as the next gunship platform. But the Precision Strike Package that is on the 'Whiskey' [AC-130W] is really what has been developed and is the same package that is going in the AC-130J."

Precision Strike Package

Air Force descriptions characterize the Precision Strike Package as "designed to provide ground forces with an expeditionary, persistent direct fires platform capable of delivering precision low-yield munitions suited for urban operations," adding that "it took less than 18 months from the first flight of a prototype modified aircraft to deployment to Operation New Dawn" and that the AC-130W gunships "have since been employed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom."

Lane highlighted the package as "a modular capability" of both guns and precision-guided munitions [PGMs], but also one in which AFSOC is attempting to develop "a standard configuration of armaments."

"For example, the Precision Strike Package currently has a 30 mm gun," he explained. "That won't change. It will be on all the aircraft. It could be removed, because it is modular, but I wouldn't expect that that would happen for any of the missions. We're just now testing the 105 [mm] gun that we're adding to the Precision Strike Package ..."

A sensor operator of the 4th Special Operations Squadron performs pre-flight system checks before takeoff on an AC-130U gunship at Hurlburt Field, Florida, in August 2007.



DEFINES THE TERM: BRING IT ON.

AT LOCKHEED MARTIN,
WE'RE ENGINEERING A BETTER TOMORROW.

When going into action, Special Operations teams only care about one thing — the “no fail” mission. The MC-130J Commando is the right choice for complex operations such as infiltration, exfiltration, precision airdrop, and air-to-air/rapid ground refueling. Lockheed Martin delivers the capability to complete every mission. Every time.

Load up on all the details at lockheedmartin.com/c130

LOCKHEED MARTIN





An AC-130W Stinger II, 73rd Special Operations Squadron (73rd SOS), taxis down the flight line at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, July 12, 2012. Stinger IIs are MC-130Ws reconfigured as gunships.

and we expect that all of the airplanes will have the 105 gun capability. But it is also modular and could be removed.”

In terms of PGMs, Lane said that all of the Precision Strike Package aircraft feature a launch system on the rear ramp “in the back that has 10 tubes; common launch tubes for smaller precision-guided munitions. Currently we shoot the [AGM-176] Griffin missile out of the door and it can hold 10 at a time with additional [missiles] stored in the airplane. And it can be reloaded in flight. So all of the airplanes will have that.”

In addition to Griffin, Lane said that the package will integrate the Boeing GBU-39/B Small Diameter Bomb-I (SDB-I) and follow-on Raytheon GBU-53/B SDB-II weapons.

“And both of those munitions would come off a rail on the out-board pylon of the wing of an AC-130,” he said.

Other weapon load possibilities include AGM-114 Hellfire missiles.

Lane said that the specific load will be “mission dependent,” explaining that current rack designs allow the aircraft to carry four of the larger PGMs under each wing.

“You potentially could have a mission where you would carry four Hellfires on one wing and four SDB-Is or SDB-IIs on another wing,” he said. “Some of that will be mission dependent on the munitions they want to carry for a specific mission. But both Hellfires and Small Diameter Bombs will be deployed from the wing pylons.”

He acknowledged that another likely future element in the Precision Strike Package would be the Joint Air-to-Ground Missile (JAGM). “We view JAGM as a follow-on or replacement for the Hellfire; a more advanced Hellfire version – same class, size, type missile. And when that’s fielded, we would look to incorporate it,” he said.

With a half-century of proven accurate and lethal firepower, some might wonder why gunships would benefit from the introduction of PGMs.

Lane said that the addition of PGMs in the Precision Strike Package addresses “a gap that’s been in the gunships for a long time.”

“You get certain things from guns that you don’t get from PGMs and vice-versa,” he said, adding that each

brings its own benefits based on target type and troop situations on the ground.

“For example, with guns you get rapid re-attack and you can increase the amount of weapons or fire on target over a short period of time that you generally don’t get with PGMs,” he explained. “Alternately, you’ll shoot a PGM at a target and hopefully the PGM destroys the target. If it doesn’t, then you could look to re-engage again with another PGM. But that usually means minutes between engagements unless you launch multiple PGMs at one target at the same time. With guns it’s a little different. When you shoot a 105 or another gun, the time from when you shoot to actual engagement of the target is seconds. So you get a damage assessment or an assessment immediately of the effect on target and then have the ability to rapidly re-engage within seconds. You really don’t get that with PGMs because you may have to reposition the airplane for another attack run and so forth. So, with guns and troops in contact you have the ability to do suppressive fire with guns. You generally don’t do that with PGMs. You either destroy the target or you miss it and you have to re-engage, where with guns even close is good sometimes if you’re stopping the enemy from firing at the friendlies.”

“Depending on the weapon, PGMs also give a significant stand-off capability that you don’t get with guns,” he added. “So, each weapon type provides a different capability, a different ‘arrow in the quiver’ as it were, for the gunship suite.”

Along with enhanced stand-off capabilities, the planned incorporation of SDB-II will include integration of a data link that could allow the weapon to be retargeted in flight, expanding the PGM target set to moving and maritime targets.

All of the Precision Strike Packages are currently equipped with 20-inch sensors that have both electro-optic and infrared capability and are capable of target designation.

Lane said that, in addition to the optics of weapon suites on both the legacy gunships and the new platforms, the gunships have a number of defensive systems designed to address a range of battlefield threats.

**Praetorian Standard, Inc. honors
all the Special Operations Forces
members who have paid the
ultimate price for freedom, including:**

Jason D. Landphair

Matthew E. Fineran

Walter D. Fisher



PRAETORIAN STANDARD, INC.

AC-130J Ghost rider

As noted earlier, the Precision Strike Package on the AC-130W Stinger II will also be carried on the AFSOC "objective" gunship solution. The AC-130J Ghost rider will bring myriad benefits from the new C-130J airplane platform.

"The AC-130J will be much more sustainable for a number of reasons," Lane said. "For example, with the legacy platforms we're having vanishing vendors and difficulty keeping those airplanes flying at a high availability rate. The AC-J is also a more capable platform in terms of performance – flying higher, faster, and capable of carrying more weight. And that's also a big benefit for gunships, because the legacy platforms were pretty much maxed out gross weight-wise. So it was difficult to add anything to the weapon systems, without adding weight that degraded the performance of the aircraft."

"Also, the AC-130J is the same basic platform as our MC-130J [Commando II], so a lot of the base green aircraft systems are common," he added. "And that will really help us logistics-wise in terms of spares and so forth. Instead of having three or four different models of C-130s with completely different systems, we really have a large fleet of C-130Js with common systems that are much easier to sustain logistically."

Other benefits come from reduced crew sizes, from the current 13-man crew on the AC-130U to a nine-man end state size on the AC-130J.

Current plans call for the acquisition of 37 Ghost rider gunships as one-for-one replacements for the current legacy fleet.

Lane said that AFSOC is slated to receive two aircraft per year "for the first couple of years," with an anticipated AC-130J fleet size of 11 aircraft by 2018.

"After that we're going to field about four per year," he added. "Now, that could change. It could go up about one or two, but current plan is about four per year. So, we're really looking at into the early and mid '20s before we have all 37 AC-Js fielded."

One glimpse of potential future upgrades to the gunship fleet emerged during Heithold's panel participation noted earlier. Asked to identify areas where industry technologies could help AFSOC over the next few years, he offered, "... You're going to find this hard to believe, but we don't want to kill everybody we have in our sights. There are times, actually, where we would like to have non-lethal means to force them to stop what they're doing. Things like microwave energy guns. It would be real nice someday, since we have the room on an AC-130, perhaps we should be looking at a microwave energy gun that makes people stop what they're doing without having to kill them. Then, secondly, a high-energy laser in place of the 105 [mm] on an AC-130J. I've got my aircraft in a 'block build' configuration, where we spirally develop them. And these are things that are out there in a 'Block 40/Block 50' configuration someday as we look to the future. [If] we just want to take a comm[unications] node out in the middle of the night, nobody sees anything; nobody hears anything, because we burn a hole in it."

"Lasers are coming," echoed Lane. "There's no doubt about that. Technology has progressed to the point that I think we'll probably see lasers on some aircraft for some missions or target sets at least within a decade, in my opinion. And, you know, depending on what you're using



The AC-130J Ghost rider will provide close air support, special operations armed airborne reconnaissance, and ordnance delivery to precise targets in support of ground forces.

them for, I think there will be some policy issues with a laser – it gets people as opposed to, I guess, material targets because it is a burning weapon."

Referencing his own extensive history and participation in the gunship arena, Lane identified correlations between conflict cycles, aircraft designs, and changing tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs).

"Over the past 25 or 30 years, we've had periods where we've been in active conflicts or just come out of active conflicts," he began. "And, during those time periods, you have a fairly rapid development in TTPs and systems that you field on the airplanes – many times to counter what the enemy is doing. So, for the past decade since we have been in active conflict, we've seen a lot of changes: upgrades to sensors, upgrades to weapons, and so forth. In the time periods where we haven't had or it's been a number of years since we've had active conflict, you tend to not have the rapid development but the long-range plan – maybe next airplane. Take the AC-130U, for example. When it came on board, we hadn't been in active conflict for a while, so it was a deliberate longer-range plan. We'd field these airplanes with a weapon suite that didn't change. It was fairly static for a while. Conversely, in periods of time when you're in active conflict like we've seen for the last decade, we've upgraded the sensors even on the legacy platforms and we've upgraded some of the weapons. We've certainly seen that on the AC-130W and now on the AC-130J, where you end up fielding new capability almost every year."

Lane offered a closing reflection on the transformation of the gunship platform and the men who fly it.

"A lot of good things have happened and a lot of new capabilities have been added," he said. "I think one of the things that amazes me the most is how much more and how much better the crew members are than I was when I was young. They seem to be so much better and able to handle more in the way of complex tasks, situational awareness, what's going on on the battlefield now than it seemed like the crews could back in the day when I flew. I think that's a testament to how great the troops are, but also in the technology that's allowed more information, better information to the crews as they fly the missions." ■



AFSOC TODAY:

The Wing Commanders Speak

By John D. Gresham

U.S. AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (AFSOC) is a fundamentally different kind of special operations force (SOF) from the other service component commands within U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). When a Special Forces (SF) team is pinned down by the enemy and needs precision air support, AFSOC Special Tactics (ST) personnel are the ones who do that job better than anyone else. Similarly, while the legendary 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment has a well-known ability to put personnel onto any spot in the world, plus or minus 30 seconds from time-on-target, it is AFSOC MC-130 tanker/transporters that make sure they have the airborne gas to actually reach and return from the selected landing zones (LZs). When a shot-down pilot needs to be rescued from behind enemy lines, AFSOC ST personnel are the ones who jump into the darkness and bring them home. AFSOC does all that, and a lot more. You need to reopen an airfield nearly wrecked by a massive earthquake? AFSOC ST did exactly that in Haiti several years ago, allowing desperately needed relief supplies, personnel, and capabilities to be delivered within a matter of hours.

AFSOC is often referred to as an “enabling force,” and provides the rest of SOCOM (among many other military forces and organizations) the ability to get where they need to go, and do what they need to do. It is these kinds of skills and capabilities, not resident anywhere else within SOCOM, that make AFSOC an essential consideration in the planning of any special operation anywhere in the world.

AFSOC is composed of dozens of active duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard units based around the globe. But the operational and combat power of the command resides within four Special Operations Wings (SOWs) and one Special Operations Group (SOG). These five units, and the four different bases they call home, represent a carefully structured organization designed to maximize the ability to deploy and operate, while making sure that their personnel and their dependents are cared for in a manner befitting some of America’s finest warriors. On this 25th anniversary of the standup of Air Force Special Operations Command, we spoke to the five commanding officers of these units to see what they had to say about what is special and unique about each of their commands.

**COL. SEAN M. FARRELL – 1ST SOW
(Hurlburt Field, Florida)**

The oldest and longest tenant at Hurlburt Field, the 1st SOW traces its roots back to the Air Commandos of World War II and the Cold War. Today the 1st SOW is the flagship unit for AFSOC, and continues its tradition of aerial unconventional warfare as one of the two largest combat wings in the command. Composed of more than 70 aircraft, including the AC-130, MC-130, CV-22, U-28, and PC-12, 1st SOW is one of two stateside AFSOC combat wings that trains, maintains, organizes, and packages Air Force special warfare forces for deployments overseas. This is a tradition for Hurlburt Field that dates back three quarters of a century to when Jimmy Doolittle and his Tokyo Raiders trained at and around Hurlburt and Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) before their famous 1942 raid against Japan.

The current commander of the 1st SOW is Col. Sean M. Farrell, who has more than 3,500 flight hours in C-130 Hercules variants, including combat in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

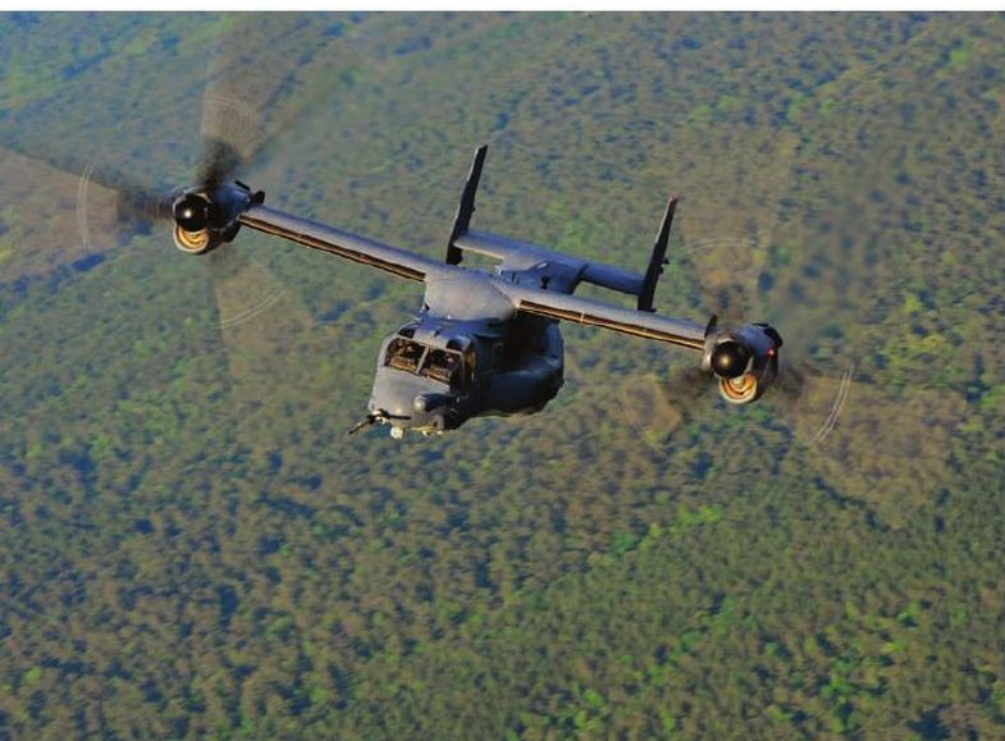
The Year in Special Operations: You have spent most of your career in various versions of the C-130 Hercules. What kind of things did you learn in those airframes and how do those lessons influence your approach today as you run 1st SOW?

Col. Sean M. Farrell: Well, as you know, my first AFSOC airframe was the AC-130H Spectre gunship. That airframe traditionally in combat carries anywhere from 13 to 14 crew members, and in garrison operations such as in training, we can put up to 21 people on one of those aircraft. So, the first thing you learn in gunships

is that teamwork is paramount, and everyone having the same goal is paramount. And being able to properly articulate that as a leader inside that aircraft is also very important. I think a lot of those same skills I've brought to the 1st Special Operations Wing, where I have to very clearly articulate my position and get my entire wing pulling on the same end of the rope. I think another critical thing I learned in gunships is teamwork with others outside your team sharing a common goal. So, whether it's the ground force commander or a JTAC [Joint Terminal Attack Controller] on the ground, we have to make sure that our efforts are synchronized with other organizations. I see my role as 1st SOW commander the same way. I have to synchronize the activities of my wing with my higher headquarters as well as my component brothers and sisters.

You and the 1st SOW live in a complex of bases that is one of the most diverse in the Air Force. What did you find waiting for you when you arrived at 1st Special Operations Wing that was different from the range complexes and the infrastructure you had out at Cannon AFB, New Mexico?

Obviously the ranges at Cannon are a lot newer to the AFSOC portfolio, so they're not as mature as the ranges that we have here in the Eglin complex. I also think there is a little bit more freedom of maneuver with respect to our ranges in New Mexico; however, our ranges here provided by the Eglin range complex are currently suiting all of our needs and we have a very good relationship with our partners both at the 33rd Fighter Wing and the test folks. Also, I like to take advantage of our unique proximity, or close proximity, to 7th Special Forces Group (SFG) to be able to train with one of our traditional partners.



OPPOSITE PAGE: A Lockheed C-130E Hercules aircraft takes off during Emerald Warrior 2014 at Stennis International Airport, Mississippi, May 2, 2014. Emerald Warrior is an annual, joint exercise to train special operations, conventional, and partner-nation forces in combat scenarios designed to hone special operations air and ground combat skills, and is the Department of Defense's only irregular warfare exercise.

LEFT: A U.S. Air Force CV-22 Osprey from the 8th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) flies over an undisclosed location before dropping members of the Deployed Aircraft Ground Response Element (DAGRE) during Emerald Warrior, May 2, 2014.

FITCC

Supporting Special Operations Forces
College Credit for Military Training & Experience



Proudly serving civilian, veteran, and military students

For more information, call (910) 678-1050 or visit www.faytechcc.edu/fort_bragg



O'GARA

SENSOR SYSTEMS

VISION. BEACONS. LASERS.

COVERT BEACON TECHNOLOGY

O'Gara manufactures a full line of beacons for your marking needs. Systems are available for dismounted soldiers, vehicles, forward operating bases, or airfields, and are optimized for operation in thermal or other covert spectral bands. Our leading-edge technology allows up to 15km visibility to MWIR targeting pods.

Whether your mission requires CID or TTL tasks, O'Gara has a beacon solution for you.

Contact: sensors@ogaragroup.com
Phone: +1 (937) 490-2509

www.OGARASENSORSYSTEMS.COM



Two MC-130P Combat Shadows perform a fly-by over the control tower at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Sept. 19, 2014. The Combat Shadows completed their final combat deployment. The entire fleet will be retired next summer.

You command a unit that has a long and rich history and tradition of service to SOCOM, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the nation. Given that history and 1st SOW's "can do" reputation, how has that shaped your command approach to it?

I think that the roles and missions that our commandos have undertaken in the past are really very similar to the ones that we're taking on right now, and will be called upon to take in the future. I think that our airmen are displaying ingenuity, tenaciousness, and courage every day, and I think that our quiet professionalism prevents us from speaking too much more about it.

Can you talk about the units that are presently resident at Hurlburt within your wing and, if you could, include also the support units and what missions the wing is tasked with?

Within the 1st Special Operations Wing, I have four subordinate groups: medical, maintenance, operations group, and support. In addition to the 1st SOW assets at Hurlburt Field, we currently are hosting 34 partner or tenant organizations that represent six Air Force major commands. So, as the host unit, the 1st SOW is responsible for much of the care and feeding of those personnel and tenant organizations, including medical and personnel and standard base support.

What about your flying squadrons?

We like to get our squadrons into mission sets, so we've got CV-22s that represent our primary special operations mobility assault force. They bring unique tilt-rotor capability to the fight that allows us with the speed of an aircraft to get in and off target, but also with the flexibility of a helicopter using tilt-rotor capability to land in traditional helicopter-size landing zones. We also have what I would call more traditional special operations mobility platforms represented by MC-130H Combat Talon IIs, and their roles

are combat infiltration, exfiltration, air drop resupply, helicopter air refueling. We've also got the on-demand intelligence, surveillance, [and] reconnaissance (ISR) piece represented by U-28s that act as battlefield controllers to the ground force commander as well as managing large aircraft "stacks" overhead of our objectives. Finally, we've got precision strike that's resident at our AC-130U gunship squadron that provides close air support, overwatch protection, and battlefield reconnaissance.

Do you have an organic remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) capability of your own?

Not within the 1st SOW. However, our installation hosts the 919th's Reserve RPA unit, the 2nd SOS [Special Operations Squadron].

How would you describe the reception of the CV-22, and how is it working out overall for you?

I think the CV-22 has really matured quite well. I think where we're at in that process is our supported user, or what some people would call our customers, have a better understanding of what the CV-22 tilt-rotor brings to the fight. I think there was a misperception that tilt-rotor capability was vying for mission sets that are currently being filled by the 160th. And what we've found is if you try to put a tilt-rotor on a traditional helicopter mission, it's not a good apples-to-apples comparison. There are some things that they both do well, but there are some things absolutely that helicopters do better than tilt-rotors. And, there are some things that tilt-rotors do absolutely better

than helicopters. What we found is it's an analysis of the mission and the capability required, and once you pair the right asset to that mission, then that's where you start to gain some real efficiencies on the battlefield.

What do you expect the benefits as a wing commander to be when you have an all C-130J force?

I think the reason we have begun a recapitalization for and within AFSOC is because our aircraft are old. We've got a detachment now of MC-130Ps that are in excess of 40 years old. So those aircraft needed to be recapitalized. And, when you start talking about the gunship capabilities that the AC-130J can bring on line, it's a very good marriage of a Precision Strike Package that we see right now on the AC-130W, with capabilities that our legacy gunships bring with large caliber weapons. So, I'm very excited about bringing on board a bomb truck with guns that is able to both utilize a deep magazine with persistent fires alongside precision weapons.

COL. MATTHEW WOLFE DAVIDSON – 24TH SOW (Hurlburt Field, Florida)

The 24th SOW is the newest and most unusual of AFSOC's combat organizations. Created specifically to provide a wing-level home for AFSOC's ST community and personnel, the 24th SOW is composed of AFSOC's small but highly respected force of Combat Controllers and Pararescue Jumpers. Today, the 24th SOW is home to the most decorated collection of U.S. Air Force personnel since the end of the Vietnam War. The various Special Tactics Squadrons (STSs) of the 24th are among the most requested and tasked units in all of SOCOM.

Col. Matthew Wolfe Davidson, has spent his entire Air Force career as a member of the ST community. Davidson is the second commander of the 24th SOW, and is hard at work standing up the various STSs that will represent the structure of his wing worldwide.

The Year in Special Operations: You've been a part of the ST community for almost two decades now. What lessons did you learn along the way that you are applying today as commander of the 24th SOW?

Col. Matthew Wolfe Davidson: I feel very honored that I was able to come in and stay in this community for the majority of my career. Having been able to spend that very significant amount of time at the squadron level, you gain a very close appreciation for the airmen that make this special – for the professionalism, the competence, the camaraderie, the commitment, and the sacrifice of the folks in the unit. As we move on and we gain different perspectives, it is sometimes easy to forget that. I think that very strong foundation has been very critical, and it drives all of my thinking every day. Because in the end, until you've had that opportunity to sit in these squadrons, see what these folks do and how hard they work, and what they and their families are willing to do for the nation over and over again, it's very difficult to comprehend it. I would say that's the basis of how I think. I really think about it from their level, the folks that fight and win wars for Special Tactics who are at the squadrons, and I use that as my grounding point for everything as I go forward.



ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Stephen Petcher, 10th Combat Weather Squadron, takes observations after releasing a weather balloon during a training exercise July 31, 2013, at the Eglin Range, Florida. Special Operations Weather Teams provide immediate and accurate weather information and forecasts deep behind enemy lines.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Members from the 24th Special Operations Wing (SOW) conduct High Altitude Low Opening, or HALO, free fall proficiency training at Hurlburt Field, Florida, Feb. 7, 2014. With six Air Force Crosses, 30 Silver Stars, and a number of Bronze Stars with valor, the 24th SOW is the most decorated unit in the Air Force since the end of the Vietnam War.



The other thing that I think is of value is the way that Special Tactics is very operationally focused versus ... I would say tactically focused. From very early on, our senior airmen and lieutenants are out there, employing air power, and they're looking at it from a different perspective than our SOF and Air Force brothers in many cases. They're putting joint [forces] "pieces" together from their very first days in [ST], learning how to employ air power, which brings them a much better understanding operationally and a more joint perspective. This has been reflected by leaders in the [SOF] community, like [former SOCOM commander] Adm. [William] McRaven, who have highlighted the success of ST because of this.

Some very fine people in other U.S. SOF communities, particularly the Army Special Forces, always want one or more of your people along whenever they send a team downrange. They look upon your ST guys like their American Express cards, don't they?

I've been fortunate enough to live through that, [though] I will tell you that it hasn't always been that way. Our SF brothers are the best our nation can provide as well, and we're very honored to serve alongside with them. But, I'll tell you that the nature of small special operations teams is a very tightly formed team. So to be able to take a [ST] individual and put him in from the outside is not something that's natural to this way of organizing. That [barrier] was broken down by ST airmen, who showed up at [SOF] teams with a level of professional competence, courage, and commitment that would earn a reputation for the [ST] guys who would follow them. We value the reputation of our organization a little bit more because at the most tactical level we understand the challenge that an airman has walking into a Special Forces team room or a SEAL team room, and trying to fit in to a bunch of guys his first

time there. He becomes acutely aware of the role of the reputation in achieving what he is looking for, which is his success in supporting that mission. So, we work very diligently to preserve that reputation for our folks. I think it's an important part of our DNA from very early on.

Over the past few decades, it has become apparent that to fully employ air power to its maximum potential, there has to be a full spectrum of targeting from ground level to space. Is it safe to say that airpower "experts" had really failed to understand that idea prior to your ST folks getting in the fight in those early days after 9/11 at Mazar-e Sharif and Bagram Air Base (AB) in 2001?

I would agree with you that we certainly underestimated the importance of it in certain cases. However, institutions learn differently than individuals. I think that what really highlighted it, though, was the nature of this conflict. The real challenge is having the situational awareness of understanding everything that's happening on the battlefield, to be able to make the decision to use lethal fires when necessary. That's something that the United States has never taken lightly and the Air Force has never taken lightly, which is why so much investment has been put into the ST community. You know, in 1942, the Army Air Corps realized that you had to have airmen out there to ensure the delivery of these [fires near] Army troops was accurate. And in 1947, when the Air Force separated, they said, "That's our mission. That's our role. That's our job, to ensure that we provide air power to you, the Army." Hence the basis for this [ST] career field we have today. Often, though, I think we get caught in the technology, and think that humans are going to be replaced with technology. And there's certainly aspects where that could be the case. But when you're talking about the nature of warfare and the responsibility the United States takes toward conducting lethal operations,



ZERO POINT

Visit us at Booth
#1818 at SOFIC

NOW RECRUITING!!!

INNOVATION
TO
INTEGRATION

Zero Point provides the highest quality, cutting-edge training, equipment and consulting services to the nation's Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Special Operations communities and their partners. Seasoned and highly experienced professionals make up the Zero Point Team to assist national efforts in the improvement of capabilities to counter the persistent and growing threat of terrorism.

Zero Point is growing and we are actively seeking experienced Subject Matter Experts in support of a broad spectrum of technical services and product offerings including Electronic Warfare (EW), Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) and Computer Network Operations (CNO) exploitation, training, Research and Development (R&D) and Testing and Evaluation (T&E).



zeropointusa.com

757.721.6601

QILOPTIQ
Photonics for Innovation
An Excelitas Technologies Company

THE CHOICE OF PROFESSIONALS

More than 100,000 Image Intensified and Thermal sights supplied to over 56 countries worldwide. Low weight, low power fully ruggedised - utilising the latest technology.

DRAGON

Uncooled Thermal
Imagers



C



S

Email: sales@uk-qioptiq.com | For the latest information visit: www.qioptiq.com

it's not something that we're willing to trust to anyone other than an expert who's got the judgment, the training, and the authority to make those decisions.

How well do those ranges, facilities, and infrastructure at Hurlburt today match up with the needs and requirements of the 24th SOW?

I was stationed here first in '94, so I've got a history of watching the place a little bit. The thing with Special Tactics is we do such a broad array of operations that no one place is going to meet all of our requirements. The biggest benefit for us of being here at Hurlburt Field is a combination of two environments, both land and water, and the access to the 1st SOW, our Air Commando brothers that fly the special operations aircraft. Being merged with them allows us to train and maintain that competence level for the employment of air power. You know, we can shoot gunships here, do helo calls for fire, and helo insertions, and there's a lot of space to go move around on the range and do some swamp operations. There are great water ranges for airdrops, scuba divers, boat operations, and all the myriad amphibious operations. So, it's worked out very well for that.

However, there are other aspects of our jobs that mean we just clearly have to go elsewhere because of environmental reasons. So on the rescue side, we spend a lot of time doing the rock climbing, high angle rescue, and pulling folks off the side of the mountains in places like New Hampshire and out west in the mountainous environments. I'll tell you one of the most challenging things for us to track down in terms of places to train on a range is a Special Forces ODA [Operational Detachment Alpha] or for a SEAL team. Putting air support overhead is a collective task. It's a unit-level task. But, when you're an airman that's integrating it all, it's an individual-level task. So, we spend the majority of our time trying to put this stack of air power overhead, a very costly and expensive effort, because the first time that airmen does it with that Special Forces team on his very first deployment with no one looking over his shoulder, that No. 12 guy in that ODA [the ST airman] has got 11 people looking over his shoulder. You always have to have your first deployment and he's got to put a stack of air power overhead, and when things go wrong he's the guy that's going to create order out of the chaos on that battlefield because of what air power can provide in terms of strike and ISR and mobility. So, we spend a lot of time chasing airplanes and ranges across the United States, mainly close air support aircraft. In fact, the challenge of the declining size of the U.S. Air Force is acutely known amongst all of those folks that try to maintain their qualifications in joint terminal attack control. But in the end, this has been a great place to train. We have folks all over the place and many of them still come here to train because of the 1st SOW and the assets we have here, as well as a pretty good set of ranges for us to use here at Eglin.

What is the current configuration of the 24th SOW and what units are in it?

Within the 24th SOW there's really three subordinate entities. The first one is the 720th Special Tactics Group and my

Wing 06 (colonel commanding) Headquarters located here at Hurlburt, along with an Operational Support Squadron (OSS). Then we have the Special Tactics Squadrons, each with its 05 (lieutenant colonel commanding) headquarters. There's one here at Hurlburt – the 23rd STS – the 21st STS up at Pope Field, the 22nd STS out at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the 26th STS out at Cannon AFB, and the 17th STS at Fort Benning, Georgia. The STSs also have their own OSSs, which do their ops and some support functions. The next entity is the 724th Special Tactics Group, which is also an 06 headquarters responsible for tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP), which is located up at Fort Bragg, and they also have an operational support squadron, a Special Tactics Squadron, and the mission support squadron associated with that organization. And, then we have the Special Tactics Training Squadron, which is located here at Hurlburt, that directly reports to the wing and is responsible for the initial upgrade training for Combat Control, Special Operations Weather Teams (SOWTs), and SOF-specific pararescue TTPs as they come into AFSOC. So, it's really those three entities. Two groups, the 720th and 724th and their Training Squadron, and the Special Tactics Training Squadron.

Can you contrast the number of ST personnel that you actually have with the number for which you actually are authorized?

Well, I'll start by saying that for Combat Controllers, we're authorized 488 and currently have 375. For Pararescue Jumpers, we're authorized 169 and have 116. For Tactical Air Control Party (TacP) personnel, we're authorized at 117 and we have 87, and for Special Operations Weather Team members, we're authorized 96 and have 66. For Special Tactics officers, we're authorized 76 and have 56. Combat Rescue officers, we're authorized 21 and have 10. And for our SOWT officers, we're authorized 12 and have four. So, overall in the ST operator specialties that we have, we're about 73 percent manned across those personnel. So we're currently sitting about 700 operators. I'd say we probably have about another 500 to 600 mission supporters – you know, radio maintainers and parachute riggers and all those kind of folks that make the ST mission happen for us. But when it comes to battlefield effects, it's a very, very small force that achieves these effects. We run as hard as the nation needs us to run and our break point is when a squadron commander says, "I can't send my guys anymore." I think one of the things I am working on is to try to get a better understanding of what our limits are before we push our men past their limits in doing this, because the demand doesn't go away. And if I had 100 additional people today, I could find 100 new billets, because other communities would convert their billets to mine in a minute if I would give them a guy to put into it.

**COL. TONY D. BAUERNFEIND – 27TH SOW
(Cannon AFB, New Mexico)**

Just a few years ago, after the last round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings, Cannon AFB was for all intents and purposes dead. Never a

ONE RELIABLE OPTIC THAT DOES IT ALL


Trijicon®

Brilliant Aiming Solutions™

Trijicon
1-6x24
VCOG®



**FIND OUT
MORE**

© 2015 Trijicon, Inc. | Wixom, MI USA | 1-800-338-0563 | www.trijicon.com

ARRESTING IMAGES

A wall of water is thrown up by an 11-meter RHLB from Special Boat Team 20 during a tactical maneuver in a training exercise with service members from Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, and Peru at the Stennis Space Center as part of PANAMAX 2011.

DEFENSE IN DEPTH

Regular photo galleries and photo essays showcase the finest military photography from yesterday and today. Whether telling a particular story or just sampling the latest, most impressive work of young photojournalists in the military, DMN regularly features the best and most striking images from a broad range of sources.

www.defensemedianetwork.com



defensemedianetwork



Staff Sgt. Seth Rosbrugh, 27th Special Operations Maintenance Squadron armament technician, and Airman 1st Class Thomas Orton-McIntyre, armament technician, remove a 105 mm blast diffuser from an AC-130H Spectre. The men and women of the 16th Aircraft Maintenance Unit have had the sole responsibility of inspecting, repairing, and maintaining these gunships throughout their tenure at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, and even since they served in Vietnam.

avored base by Air Combat Command (ACC) after the end of the Cold War, Cannon was viewed as redundant and expendable, and scheduled for closure. However, then-Gov. Bill Richardson and the civic leaders in north-eastern New Mexico saw a different future for Cannon, and began a determined effort to keep the base open and find a new client to make use of it. Their selling point was space. Lots of it. Cannon AFB has a vast tract of range space adjacent to the base, which is absolutely ideal for training of all kinds, including live fire. With little or no civilian intrusion on the perimeter of the base and its ranges, Cannon AFB had incredible potential if only a new military tenant could be found with that particular need. Enter AFSOC.

As part of its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)-mandated expansion due to be completed by 2013, AFSOC needed to stand up a new SOW at a base with good training/live-fire ranges. So the obvious “fit” between the New Mexico political leadership and AFSOC was quickly recognized and an agreement made for Cannon AFB to be the home for a brand-new SOW, the 27th. Conducting a variety of roles and missions for AFSOC, Cannon AFB and its tenant 27th SOW are both similar to and different from Hurlburt Field and its 1st SOW. Both provide basing, training, maintenance, and packaging of AFSOC forces for overseas contingencies, but their peripheral roles and missions are somewhat different. In the case of Cannon AFB, it tends to host more training and certification exercises, and has different schoolhouses from Hurlburt Field.

The commander of the 27th SOW at the time of this interview was Col. Tony D. Bauernfeind, although one week later he transferred command of the wing to Col. Benjamin R. Maitre and moved into a new assignment.

The Year in Special Operations: You command a relatively new SOW at a relatively new base that is still building the necessary facilities and infrastructure to accomplish your mission. That said, how important is the teamwork you are trying to create within the 27th SOW as the wing and base mature?

Col. Tony D. Bauernfeind: That’s one of the big things I brought to the table here at Cannon Air Force Base, and it takes every single one of our 6,000 members of the wing, all rolling in the same direction, to be successful in our missions. And so, teamwork is key to me. Too many times in our career we tend to try to define our value by how close to the fight we are, and then it’s just not a teamwork focus. When you have everybody in the wing and on the base knowing their impact to the mission, and knowing their value to the mission, that’s going to be a much more successful team. We’ve embraced that here in our wing mission statement, that our mission in life is to provide precise, reliable, flexible, and responsive specialized air power for our joint teammates. Whether that be Green Berets, Rangers, SEALs, Marine Special Operations Battalions, Combat Control, Pararescuemen, or allied SOF, our joint teammates are going to know that we’ve got their back with a blanket of specialized air power. Here at the 27th SOW, that air power includes manned and unmanned ISR and specialized mobility, assault, and precision strike capabilities to make sure that we as a joint team are successful on the battlefields.

Can you tell us the composition of the wing and units?

The wing is configured into four groups. You start with the 27th Special Operations Group. They own the air crews, the intelligence force, and all the support

personnel specifically for air operations. Air crew flight equipment, air traffic control, intelligence support, the aviation resource management, the weather folks – those all belong to the ops group. Then I have the 27th Special Operations Maintenance Group. They own the aircraft and maintain the aircraft. We've got the best maintainers in all of DOD, and you know they got the award last year to prove it. They do a phenomenal job with an under-resourced and an inexperienced force, so I'm very proud of what our maintainers do. Then our third group is our 27th Special Operations Mission Support Group. Not only do they deploy downrange to provide agile combat support capabilities, but they also kind of replicate the garrison and installation responsibilities. They're our security forces to make sure our flight line and our installations stay safe and go downrange to support operations to make sure those outside-the-wire operations are safe. Our communications squadrons, which ensure the networks. Our logistics readiness squadron is making sure the logistics machine and the supply machine and the deployment machine is running. The contracting squadron makes sure all the money gets where it needs to and we spend a lot of money on here. The 4th Support Squadron takes care of the quality of life programs, the personnel programs that keep our airmen and their families happy. And then our civil engineering squadron – the civil engineering [CE] squadron is another absolute all-star. Two out of the last three years, they've been highlighted as the Air Force's best CE squadron. And the reason they didn't win it in the middle year, they're not allowed to compete the year after they win.

Those are within the Mission Support Group, and then the fourth group I've got is the 27th Medical Group.

Within my Ops Group I've got numerous squadrons. I've got three RPA squadrons. One is an MQ-1 squadron transitioning to MQ-9s. The other is an MQ-9 [squadron]. And, the third is a launch and recovery squadron.

Then the 16th Special Operations Squadron, which is the AC-130H Spectres, we're in the phases of retiring those last few. The 20th SOS CV-22 Ospreys, the 56th Special Operations Intel squadron, the 73rd with AC-130W Stingers, the 318th Special Operations Squadron that just transitioned from [the] PC-12 utility mission to the U-28 manned ISR mission and just finished their first combat deployment – wildly successful. The 9th SOS MC-130J squadron. And then the 524th Special Operations Squadron that's operating C-146s. So, you see, we have quite the diverse air armada out there on the ramp. It's usually on the ramp because it's deployed forward.

And then I have several tenants, you know, our partner units on the base. The first is the 26th Special Tactics Squadron, which just stood up last year, and they're in their growth phase. They do not belong to me. We take care of them like one of our own, but their commanders are at Hurlburt Field at the 24th Special Operations Wing. Then, we have the 551st Special Operations Squadron, which is a training squadron that provides training for our MQ-1 and MQ-9 crews and our AC-130W crews, and our NSAV [Non-standard Aviation] – our C-146 crews. And then finally we have the 43rd Intelligence Squadron, which belongs to the 25th Air Force; they provide intelligence support to many of our aviation missions and they fly right alongside us.

CV-22 Osprey aircraft on the flight line at Cannon Air Force Base.



While Cannon is expanding and developing into a fine base, there's also the range complex. Talk about it, please?

The range is absolutely the crown jewel of Cannon AFB. Just last year we were able to get the 10-year vision for the range completed, the comprehensive range plan where we can define where we're going. We've spent a lot of effort on cleaning up the range, because it was more a bombing and a gunnery range before, and we want to turn it into an air and ground special operations training range. For example, we were able to put a \$26 million JIEDDO-funded ... small city complex in there so that when our ground teammates come here to train with the air staff that we can provide, we're also providing things on the ground that enhance their training, including driving ranges. We have visions of sniper ranges to go along with that effort. Now, there are a lot of friction points as we go forward because we're trying to shove a lot of training into a fairly small piece of land, but I would not have it any other way, because we own the range. We determine the priorities, and we get some phenomenal training out there. But we do have a lot of growth that we're pushing forward because this range, with a modest amount of resourcing, can become a premier training range. Because we're in Eastern New Mexico, there's not a lot of eyes out there watching what we're doing. We can put a lot of air over the range, we can support a lot of ground teammates, and we can do it fairly inexpensively.



For the fliers in your wing, it's got to be fantastic to have all that real estate and nobody complaining about noise and other things in the middle of the night.

You're exactly right. We get to determine what we have, we schedule it, and we get the training we need from it. But we still have a long way to go. Some major areas that we're trying to work on the range, we've actually defined into four lines of operation.

The first line of operation is continuing to clean up what I would call the old administrator problems. Prime examples: The previous range had their administrative facilities right in the center of the range. The problem with that is if any bomb or weapons arc touches anywhere near that, we have to pull it away. So we're moving the entire administrative facility to the edge of the range, which frees up a lot more free fire and impact zones. In that same area we're also building fire houses, medical houses, team houses, so that the ground teams when they come out there have a quasi-administrative area to plan and bunk, so that they're not having to come off the range every night.

Line of operation two is making it a premier range for our ground teammates. You know, we've already got the small city complex, we've got the ability to call for fires, but we need to move forward with those driving ranges, sniper ranges, firing ranges, so that when there's not an air stack overhead they can still continue with training while they're out here.

The third line of operation is we've gotten very good at a counterinsurgency fight where the enemy doesn't

fire back in an aggressive manner. But we have to start training ourselves harder for that denied airspace fight. So, we're working toward how we can bring more electronic countermeasures into the range area and the Eastern New Mexico high plains so that our crews aren't just assuming that [with] the plan that they're going to have, the enemy is not going to have a vote.

And then finally, and this one bothers me the most, is that as we've brought powered munitions into our arsenal, one of the things we saw was we weren't as good downrange as we wanted to be. But through some good training, some great leadership, and basically persistence, we've brought our effectiveness with our powered kinetic engagements up to a very effective level on the battlefield. But we've been able to do that because the battlefield has allowed us to do on-the-job training. We're not always going to have that opportunity in the years forward, but we still have to be highly effective, and so I want to make sure that this range has the ground and air space to enable powered munitions training.

**COL. WILLIAM G. HOLT – 352ND SOW
(RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom)**

The largest AFSOC unit based outside of the continental United States (CONUS), the 352nd SOW is located on the venerable air base at Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall in Suffolk. But despite calling a 1930s RAF air base home, the

THE CITADEL: EDUCATING PRINCIPLED LEADERS SINCE 1842

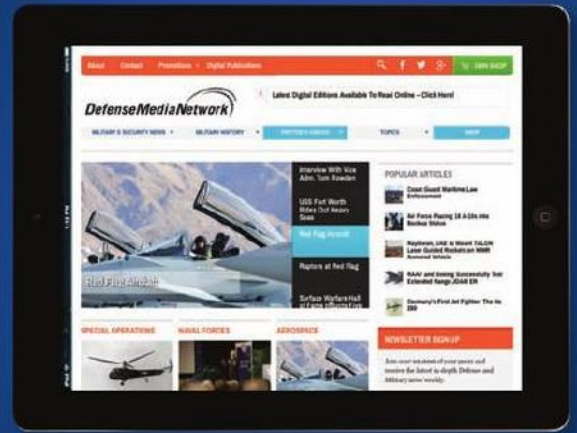


#1 Public College in the South
#1 U.S. City* (Charleston, SC)
*According to Travel + Leisure readers

citadel.edu

THE CITADEL
The Military College of South Carolina

*Offering up to a master's degree



defensemedianetwork

- Exclusive Web content
- Complete full-text interviews
- Breaking/up-to-date defense news
- Expert commentary
- Electronic archive of past issues
- Photo essays

"Defense in Depth"

www.defensemedianetwork.com

seal1.com

SEAL¹

**GET THE
TACTICAL ADVANTAGE**



**Cleaner
Lubricant
Protectant
CLP
PLUS[®]**

SEAL 1[™] CLP PLUS[®] is a Non-Toxic cleaner that dissolves carbon on contact and reduces the time it takes to clean, lube and protect your firearm.

COMPLETE GUN CARE

RED GATE GROUP



Red Gate Group proudly supports
USSOCOM mission requirements.

- Acquisition, Science and Technology
- Intelligence and Operations Support
- Information Technology

www.redgategrp.com



A CV-22B Osprey receives fuel from an MC-130H Combat Talon II June 21, 2013, off the coast of Greenland. The aircraft landed in Iceland during its journey to Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, to allow for crew rest and refueling. The CV-22, assigned to the 7th Special Operations Squadron, was the first of 10 slated to arrive as part of the 352nd Special Operations Wing expansion. The MC-130 was assigned to the 7th SOS.

352nd SOW is a unit that is evolving fast and moving soon. Until just recently, the 352nd was a SOG like the 353rd at Kadena AB in the Far East. But some expansion in the unit itself, as well as an enlargement of its roles and missions, means that in early 2015 the 352nd became a SOW. The 352nd is also extremely busy, providing aircraft and personnel for operations across Europe, Africa, and Western Asia. There are also plans to move the 352nd some time in the next several years, to Spangdahlem AB, in Germany.

The Year in Special Operations: You have a rather unique arrangement over in European Command (EUCOM) regarding the relationship of the 352nd SOW to the rest of the force. Can you explain both that structured relationship and your relationship to NATO there in EUCOM?

Col. William G. Holt: Actually, I have two hats that I wear with EUCOM and NATO. I am the Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC) commander here. That's one job. My other job is the 352nd Special Operations Wing commander, which we recently stood up as a Special Operations Wing (SOW).

It's been a very interesting year and I'm excited to get the activation behind us and see what it's like from this point forward.

At the moment, the 352nd SOW is undergoing simultaneous structural and organizational changes, which have to be described as formidable. Can you please explain them to our readers?

At the moment, the most significant changes are coming as we "split" one flying squadron into two, along with growing and reorganizing our ground echelon elements. Right now we have seven CV-22s (the 7th SOS) and seven MC-130Js (the 67th SOS), so our aircraft base is an entirely new fleet. Our oldest airplane is about two years old, and we're still flying them out of the factory. And we still have six more (three each of CV-22s and C-130Js) scheduled to arrive over the next couple of years. So, some additional CVs and some additional MC-Js, and some additional personnel for maintenance and flying those aircraft are also inbound. So, the 352nd SOW in the near-term future will continue to grow slowly as we get those additional assets. That's probably the most exciting thing we have going on. There are also some new focuses here in Europe, based on missions within the area of responsibility (AOR), and then we're also doing some cross-Combatant Command support to U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), because they don't have their own SOF aviation component. So we support both theaters.

What shape are your facilities and the infrastructure there at RAF Mildenhall in today? We get the idea that you're not going to be there that long. But talk first about Mildenhall if you will?

Mildenhall's facilities are fairly old, and there's not a lot of new construction on the base. My offices are actually on the side of a hangar that was built, I believe, in 1932. It's been obviously upgraded since then, but at one point it was being camouflaged. There were spotlights on the roof and air raid sirens that were vintage World



War II or somewhere in that time frame. That said, we have a wonderful relationship with the host wing, the 100th Air Refueling Wing. So we work with them to keep the facilities operating, although they are definitely showing age. We need a new home, and that is going to be on the European continent.

I'll start by saying our Western European partners have great range opportunities for us, some of them very good. But, those nations also tend to have a lot of restrictions on operating in their countries – places like France, Germany, Italy, and so forth. As far as Eastern Europe is concerned, we have really good working relationships with all the nations in Eastern Europe right now, and there are some really good training opportunities there, although those nations themselves don't necessarily have the same funding for their military as some of the Western European nations. But we do partner with all of those nations across the continent.

The biggest challenge is going to be the move of the wing to Spangdahlem, Germany. That won't occur for several

years, and will be a challenge for my successor for sure. We're already working some of the details and there's going to be a lot of new military construction (MILCON) for our wing before we get there. But there will also be some challenges with developing training opportunities there. But that will just be something we have to do like we do here in England. But sometime in the next five to seven years, the wing will move from RAF Mildenhall to Spangdahlem, and Mildenhall will close at that point.

With two major regional Combatant Commands to service, it goes without saying that the 352nd SOW is a very high opstempo unit. I recognize you've got new airplanes, but how does that very high opstempo strain your aircraft crews and support personnel, and how are you managing those stresses?

For us, the opstempo is a little different than the other wings. We are on the road a lot but it tends to be on shorter duration – one-to-two week types of missions



The 352nd Special Operations Wing Honor Guard detail prepares to post the colors prior to the official redesignation of the 352nd SOW and the activation of the 752nd Special Operations Group and 352nd Special Operations Maintenance Group in Hangar 814 on RAF Mildenhall, March 23, 2015.

and engagements. We do cover longer combat rotations like other SOWs, but primarily we are on the road for shorter periods of time, then back home for one or two weeks, and then back out on the road again. The toughest challenge I have right now with opstempo is the crew ratios. With new airplanes come new crews, and we are still building up our crew force for the CV-22 and the MC-130J. I won't get into specific details on the numbers, but not being 100 percent yet probably creates some extra work for the folks as far as what's required to make a squadron operate, and make the SOW operate.

Overall they're doing well. You know, at the end of the night, we're in Europe. We're living in a country that really likes having us here, and I think our officer and enlisted personnel, both single and married, have a really good time here and learn a lot. But, it doesn't mean the opstempo doesn't put some stress on them, because it does.

Let's talk a little bit about those new airplanes, the CV-22B Osprey and C-130J Hercules. How do you like them, and what do you like about them?

I like speed, I think like all aviators do, although I've spent most of my career flying small airplanes and AC-130s that aren't real fast. The thing I like about the CV-22 is that it can carry 24 troops in the back and move them at a "get-out-of-town" speed – you know, C-130 speed, about twice as fast as a helicopter and about twice as far. So, that's what we like about the CV-22. It's very quick to move people and supplies wherever they need to go. And then, of course, there is the vertical landing piece of the platform. A lot of people will equate the CV-22 to a fast helicopter. I think it's better to equate it to a small C-130 – a 1/3- to 1/2-size C-130 that can land vertically when it needs to, because that's the speeds that it does fly at. The crews love the aircraft, and our ST folks really enjoy the airplane.

In addition, there is the MC-130J. Although it looks just like an earlier-model C-130, it is not the same C-130 that I grew up flying. It's got a lot of power and a lot of new modern avionics similar to what's in the CV-22. I really enjoy the airplane. It can go farther, faster, higher and at a significantly more reliable rate than our previous C-130-based platforms. And I look forward to seeing some of the new platforms, like the AC-130J, roll out, because I think the J model C-130 brings a host of capabilities that are very welcome when compared to the older, heavier gunships or C-130s.

How do you feel about your Special Tactics Squadron and what kinds of things are they doing day-to-day that are exciting over there?

Well, I love the 321st STS here. I had Special Tactics personnel that worked for me when I was deployed in theater for a year, and I say in theater, in CENTCOM for a year. I've grown to have a lot of trust in them. I care a lot for that community. They do some very exciting training, just like our other aircraft. We do some training out in the mountains out in Wales. They're not like the Rocky Mountains, but they do offer a lot of training capability up in Scotland. We do a lot of mountain training up there. In addition, the Brits actually have a pretty good capability to provide things like wind tunnels, some pool training where you have the big wave pools. That's really good training for them. They also do some high angle training, and then we go out and we do a lot of over-water and in the water, in the ocean training in the North Sea, which is an extremely cold environment. So our guys get some really, really good training out there.

NEXT-GEN MOTION IMAGERY SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS.



11SMT2188523173

2d3
sensing

www.2d3sensing.com



Our Advanced Motion Imagery Capabilities Deliver Computer Vision & Excellence in Imagery Processing into your Operational Environment.

**OUR MISSION.
YOUR SOLUTIONS.**

**FEDERAL
RESOURCES**



**SUPPORTING THOSE
THAT PROTECT US ALL**



800.892.1099
www.federalresources.com

**SPECIAL OPERATIONAL
EQUIPMENT**

Contract Number: SPM8EJ-14-D-0006

CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR MILITARY FAMILY READINESS

THERE IS ONLY
IMPROVEMENT

Partner with us to turn
your program ideas
into successful solutions.
We can work together
using sound science to
improve the lives of our
military and their families.

1-877-382-9185
specops.militaryfamilies.psu.edu





The MC-130P Combat Shadow team responsible for plane 0225 performs the final checks before takeoff on Kadena Air Base, Japan, April 15, 2015. The 17th Special Operations Squadron sent off the final two MC-130P Combat Shadows in the Pacific Air Forces to retire to the aircraft boneyard at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.

LT. COL. JOHN S. TRUBE – 353RD SOG (Kadena AB, Japan)

The smallest and most distantly based AFSOC combat unit is the 353rd SOG based at Kadena AB on Okinawa, Japan. Part of the biggest collection of U.S. airpower in the Far East, the 353rd is literally on the front lines of several international tension spots including Korea and China. But the Pacific Theater has its own unique challenges for air operations, including vast distances, extreme weather variations, multiple yearly disaster scenarios (earthquakes, volcanoes, typhoons, tsunamis, etc.), and a complex interaction of military/political dynamics. It is, to say the very least, an interesting place to conduct special warfare aerial operations.

The 353rd SOG is presently headed by Lt. Col. John S. Trube, another high-time AFSOC MC-130 Talon/Combat Shadow pilot, and the group's deputy commanding officer. Trube was acting commanding officer for the group at the time of this interview:

The Year in Special Operations: What were your initial impressions of Kadena as a base, and the Far East theater? That is a big ocean and operating area out there!

Lt. Col. John S. Trube: Well, this is actually my second time out in the Pacific, and you hit the nail on the head perfectly. The tyranny of distance is really a good way to describe some of the challenges that we face out here in the Pacific. So, you've got Kadena Air Base, which is a huge facility, and it's in a very good position for us to execute our mission requirements both for Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) and Special Operations Command – Korea (SOC-K). In terms of some of the opportunities that the

Pacific presents, you've got a huge map. But what you're looking at out in the Pacific is a huge diversity of training opportunities, and a large number of joint and multinational partners that we work with. Really that speaks to the capabilities of the Air Commandos in the Pacific, that we're able to interface with so many host national and joint partners to successfully execute the mission. It's a very big area and really it presents a challenge as to how you effectively present and employ SOF airpower in an area that large, and you make every flying hour count.

How is it having to share ranges, airspace, and such – at least in and around Kadena and Okinawa – with virtually every other kind of unit in the world? You've got Korea, Japan, the PRC are sniffing around, and of course you've got other Air Force and Army Special Operations Aviation Command (ARSOAC) units in the area. Does that make for a very crowded and busy airspace management problem or do you guys have enough room to work?

Well, if you look at it from a theater perspective, all the different countries that we visit each provide their own flavor of training opportunity, so across the span of a year, all of our squadrons basically get what they need in terms of requirements to maintain not only currency but proficiency as combat-ready mission forces. In terms of Kadena proper, it gets busy sometimes, but really, as you said, you're forced to integrate and de-conflict the local training ranges. So, they are in high demand but really that gives the 353rd a continuous opportunity to constantly integrate with joint forces – and from all the different services. So we are routinely, on a daily basis, talking with Marine, Army, and Navy counterparts to



An MC-130J Commando II extends its landing gear above the flight line on Kadena Air Base, Japan, Dec. 21, 2014. The MC-130J will replace the MC-130P Combat Shadow aircraft assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Group's 17th Special Operations Squadron.

make sure that everybody gets the opportunities to train. It gets busy. Definitely there are some challenges in terms of scheduling and execution, but we view it as an opportunity to work with the joint partners.

Presently you're the acting 353rd SOG commander. Who will become the permanent boss out there, and when?

The plan right now is for Col. William C. Freeman to assume command of the 353rd SOG in May. That is a tentative date. I defer to the AFSOC leadership for the final date, but May is our tentative date on the calendar, and then I will revert back to the deputy commander position.

Can you describe the structure and organization of the 353rd SOG for our readers?

We've got five squadrons total in the group. On the support side we have the Special Operations Maintenance Squadron, which is basically our maintenance unit responsible for the generation of SOF air power. It's also our largest squadron in the group, and they have responsibility now currently for three different weapon systems: the MC-130H, the MC-130P, and the MC-130J. So they are very busy and are top-notch maintainers. We also have the 353rd Special Operations Support Squadron, and they're the guys that act as our battle staff. They execute command and control functions for us. We also have security forces, medical personnel, and communicators, along with an intelligence flight. Really, without them we don't have the coordination element and the

support necessary to execute the mission and effectively command and control our assets, which then gets into the operational side.

On the flying side, we've got the 1st SOS, which flies the MC-130H Combat Talon II, and then we have also the 17th SOS, which is in the middle of transitioning from the MC-130P Combat Shadow to the MC-130J Commando II. Finally, we have our 320th STS with Combat Controllers, Pararescue Jumpers, SOWTs, as well as a flight of support personnel to keep them ready for missions.

How much are you working with joint SOF partners like the 1st SFG and the 160th SOAR?

I would say that we have habitual relationships with our SOF partners. 1/1st SFG is a good example. We also work with Naval Special Warfare Unit One based in Guam, along with joint and multinational partners in South Korea. Then as different exercises occur in the theater, we'll work with all the joint SOF units. And when the opportunities present themselves, we try to integrate with our conventional force partners as well.

AFSOC FUTURE OPERATIONS

Throughout this article and others in this edition of *The Year in Special Operations*, the acquisition of new aircraft and systems have been discussed in detail. But how will the command use these aircraft, systems, and highly trained personnel to the greatest advantage for SOCOM and the nation in the years to come? This is a sensitive subject with AFSOC, whose personnel tends to be among the “quietest professionals” in the American special warfare community. Things as simple as which unit at which base has a particular mix of aircraft models and capabilities can reveal a great deal about the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) that the local Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) can employ. Such TTP exposures can cost aircraft and lives, not to mention contributing to possible mission failures.

That said, the near future looks much like it does today, with AFSOC's future platforms and structure already in place. While the platforms are being acquired, however, fitting them out with the needed equipment lags behind due to funding constraints. While the press reports that special operations forces' budgets remain uncut, in fact each of the component commands is beholden to its parent service for much of its equipment. If the Air Force decides to cut back on C-130J procurement due to red ink, AFSOC will be affected as well. And there is a natural knock-on effect from that. The vast majority of AFSOC's operations are driven by aircraft, system, and technology availability. This means that if a JSOTF commander does not have the right mix of the right aircraft with the necessary onboard penetration aids and countermeasure gear, then operations into certain threat environments will not be practical. Similarly, the AFSOC staff, which is slowly but surely acquiring the planned force of CV-22B Osprey and C-130J-based platforms, may not be able to use those new aircraft across the full range of operations until well into the 2020s.

Another continuing challenge for AFSOC is the matter of force density. It is a matter of hard fact that its entire force of both V-22 and C-130-variant aircraft, when fully procured, will still total less than 100 airframes. This means any loss or disablement of manned aircraft is going to affect AFSOC operations across the entire force. Further, the Obama administration's ongoing “Pivot to the Pacific” is going to have vast effects across the entire AFSOC enterprise, especially with respect to garrison basing and long-term maintenance and upgrades of aircraft and systems. SOCOM in general, and AFSOC in particular, have always had the virtue of being “economy of force” sorts of communities in terms of manpower, cost, and deployed footprints. But this virtue can also become a vice when it is spread too thinly across a planet with more wars, disasters, and humanitarian crises than it has resources to deal with them.

One other issue facing AFSOC operational planners in the years and decades ahead is a strikingly simple one: What will they be able to do? The late Rep. Thomas “Tip” O'Neill, D-Mass., is said to have coined the phrase, “Politics is the art of the possible.” Much the same can be said of AFSOC and the rest of the American special warfare community. Nobody questions that people in SOF are successful when others are not because they defined the word “impossible” differently from the rest of the U.S. military. But few would debate that even the fertile minds at AFSOC and the rest of the SOCOM component commands need some technical, intelligence, personnel, and capability “edges” to make the impossible continue to happen.

For AFSOC, these things include the promise of directed energy/laser and standoff precision weapons for the AC-130 gunship fleet; lighter and more compact equipment and systems for the Special Tactics personnel, who frequently have to carry their “magic” on their own backs into battle; and what about the possibility of a stealthy, tilt-rotor medium transport aircraft to replace the venerable and ubiquitous C-130 Hercules? These are just a few of the ideas that are publicly known about AFSOC's “wish list,” which itself runs deep and “black” with partner agencies like the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),

The questions in the next decade or two for AFSOC are going to be “what capabilities?” and “how much?”

and others. It is been said that every time a member of the special warfare community goes to see a new James Bond, Star Wars, or Pixar movie, they do so with a notepad and pencil to write down all the good ideas that Hollywood puts up on the screen.

AFSOC today is a vast enterprise compared with what it was four decades ago after the end of the Vietnam War. Its bases span the globe from Europe to the Pacific Rim, and the command has the ability to reach virtually any point on the globe should it be directed to. The questions in the next decade or two for AFSOC are going to be “what capabilities?” and “how much?” There can be no question that the introduction of the CV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor transport has revolutionized the command's capabilities and capacity. The standardization of the rest of the command's aircraft around the C-130J Hercules is already paying benefits in terms of manpower and finance, along with maintainability and reliability.

Most important of all are people. They have always been the key to everything the command has been and done and remain so today. That is sure to remain the one constant into the future, whatever it may hold. ■



Pave Low Leaders

Maj. Gen. Richard Comer, USAF (Ret.)

WE DEPLOYED TO OPERATION DESERT SHIELD in August 1990. At the time, I commanded the 20th Special Operations Squadron, flying the MH-53 Pave Low helicopter, and roughly half of the squadron deployed while half of the squadron stayed home for other possible missions. The split of the squadron in this way was not a healthy thing, as half of us were living in the desert heat and in tents, far away from home and fearful that we might be there a long time with no real war to fight. Half

were home and wishing to be in the desert in case there was a war. It was tough on bonding a squadron together, especially after about three months, when family strains were showing for some and not others.

Our squadron had two primary missions as we trained in the desert: combat rescue alert and a special ops mission to attack two radar sites just north of the border with Saudi Arabia. These radar sites were far away from Kuwait, west of where we were stationed in Saudi by



Four Pave Lows led eight Army Apaches in the mission to open Operation Desert Storm.

about 400 miles and straight south of the Iraqi capital city, Baghdad. We began training for these missions, and any other special operations missions that might come up, by late August. It was to be a joint helicopter mission, with us flying to lead Army Apache helicopters to the radar sites, which were their targets. Our helicopters had an integrated GPS navigation system and the Apaches had the firepower to destroy the targets. Our early flying in Saudi had taught us that the mapping of the Middle East was unreliable but our GPS was always right. The Apaches had all the firepower we would need to destroy the sites. The war plan placed this mission first on the attack plan, and the coalition air forces would pour into Iraq through the blind spot we would create in the Iraqi radar picture.

We had established our living conditions in tents and had endured the extreme heat of summer. We were getting used to it by October, when the weather cooled off significantly. We were practicing for the opening mission in earnest by that time. I put our best pilot on the job of planning the mission. He and I were the only guys in the squadron to know the timing of the mission. He included his flight engineer, Master Sgt. Mike Lael, on the planning. Lael would develop the program, navigation points, and timing for our mission computers.

Early in November, the president made an additional decision to deploy most of the troops from Europe to

NO COMPROMISES

LMT 35th Anniversary Gun

Limited Edition



“ As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, our prime focus has always been no compromises. This commitment to excellence has been demonstrated by the patented monolithic rail receiver with quick change barrel system, the quick change adjustable carbine length DMR buttstock, the family of M203 grenade launchers and the stand-alone mounts. With many more exciting solutions to come, we would like to thank you for your continued support. ”

- Karl Lewis



- 2015 release in honor of our Emerald Anniversary.
- Anodized Olive Drab Green from factory.
- Barrel options: 10.5" & 16", California compliant available.

Lewis Machine & Tool Company
Milan, Illinois
Main: 309.787.7151
Sales: 309.732.9527

lmtdefense.com

© 2015 Lewis Machine & Tool Company | All Rights Reserved.





A front close-up view of an MH-53J helicopter of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, equipped with the new Pave Low infrared system for night operations, in flight near the English coast in 1989. The AFSOC Pave Lows had the GPS and terrain-following/avoidance systems needed for penetration into Iraqi airspace.

have offensive capability. My wing commander saw it as a two-month delay before any action would occur. As most of the wing was split in the same way as was my squadron, he ordered all of the commanders home for a month. In my case, I attended a Commander's Training Course in Missouri, then a training exercise at my home base at Hurlburt Field, [Florida]. While I was there, Master Sgt. Bobby Jenkins came into the office and asked for some time to talk.

Bobby had set up his retirement the previous summer and had begun terminal leave at the beginning of October. I was sitting at my desk working on four months of backlogged paperwork. I looked up to see Bobby looking at me around the doorway. His hair was already pretty long and he had a nice looking, full moustache. The home half-squadron had given a hail and farewell in mid-October where Bobby had received his medal, his plaque, and had told everyone that his family needed him to get out of this business. I invited him in. I congratulated him on his now-completed career. I remarked that the recent announcement of "Stop Loss" would have caught him if he had not already been on terminal leave. He told me that he had come to talk to me about just that. He asked me if I thought the squadron needed him and, if so, what he could do to help.

I had an immediate answer for him, despite my surprise at the offer. I told him that we did need him, that the squadron's helicopter gunner force certainly needed another master sergeant for leadership, and that I would like to see him in uniform to work things here in the states for another month or so, then I would send him over to Saudi Arabia by Christmas. The currently deployed lead gunner had spent four months in the desert and I couldn't give him any relief without another six-striper. Bobby looked at me for a couple of seconds and said he'd go over to the base personnel office and see what he had to do to come in off terminal leave. By 2 o'clock that afternoon, a clean-shaven and short-haired Bobby Jenkins was sitting in the ops superintendents' office working over the schedule of training the new gunners in the .50-caliber machine gun. Bobby looked into my office to tell me he had also stopped off at home to get back into uniform. He told me then that his wife, Dottie, might be a little upset at me since I had recalled him from



WARRIORS FAST TRACK.

Give your career
a boost with one
of our one-year,
FAST TRACK
graduate programs.
troy.edu/fasttrack

- Master of Accountancy
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Science in Computer Science
- Master of Science in Criminal Justice
- Master of Science in Human Resource Management
- Master of Science in Management
- Master of Science in Strategic Communication



Feel it at troy.edu/workingwarrior or call 1-800-586-9771.

TROY
UNIVERSITY™
• Founded in 1887 •

© 2015 Troy University

From The Princeton Review, August 1, 2014 © 2014 TPR Education, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution, or retransmission of this Content without express written permission is prohibited.

YOUR FRONTLINE DEFENSE ON THE INTELLIGENCE BATTLEFIELD

A recognized leader in the Intelligence,
Defense and Civilian communities -
providing cutting edge operational,
technical and cyber solutions.



CALL TO LEARN MORE:
703-273-0003
OR VISIT **SC3.COM**





Members of the 1723rd Combat Control Squadron rappel from an MH-53H Pave Low III helicopter during a training exercise over the Florida panhandle in the 1980s.

terminal leave and officially prevented his retirement. I consented to taking the blame as long as Bobby didn't think his wife was a violent person.

As expected, we were allowed to trade some people at the beginning of December, and Bobby Jenkins came over and became the ranking helicopter gunner of the deployment. We still did not know if we were going to really have a war or whether we were going to sit in the desert and keep training for months to come. We knew the war plan, continued to train hard, and had a desert Christmas. We also watched the debates at the U.N. and in Congress on authorizing the president to use force and setting the 15th of January as the deadline for the Iraqis to leave Kuwait. The diplomacy and the congressional debates made our training and preparation more urgent in our minds. The U.N. set the deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait, so we also had a date set to ensure our readiness.

We trained hard the next four weeks, making sure all the newly rotated crew members were integrated into the existing crews and rehearsing what was to be the first mission of the war several times. On Jan. 12, 1991, we received orders from our wing commander, Col. George Gray, to move to our forward operating base for the war plan; this was a call to battle stations. We moved on Jan. 14 to Al Jouf, a small airfield in western Saudi Arabia. It was a 6-hour flight from King Fahd International Airport where we were stationed. We organized air refuelings and the movement of essentially our entire squadron in a day-and-a-half. When there, we were given a fairly large dormitory-style building to live in – it was actually

an improvement over the tents we had occupied at King Fahd airfield since August.

The war plan gave our helicopter operation the first mission of the war to cross the border into Iraq. We teamed with an Army Apache helicopter battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Dick Cody, whose unit also moved to Al Jouf. Everyone was in place by the night of the 14th and the machines were all serviceable. We spent the 15th getting the house in order, erecting a tent to serve as a planning/briefing facility on the flight line, establishing communications, ensuring security, and configuring the aircraft. Waiting for further instructions, we planned some local flights on the 16th to plot a dispersal location and to ensure all the aircraft remained ready.

At about 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the 16th, I was at the base HQ with Col. [Ben] Orrell, who was the commanding officer at Al Jouf. He got a secure phone call from Col. Gray at King Fahd. Col. Orrell told me then the war was to begin that night and H-hour was set for 0300 local time. I asked him if he meant that we should be prepared to go at that time or if we were really going. He assured me that we were going in that night, not just preparing a possibility. I know it was a dumb question, but I found it hard to believe. I did some quick calculations and told him the briefing for the crews should be set

for 2230 local and the takeoff for our formations would occur around 0100. With H-Hour at 0300, our time for the Apaches to open fire on the two radar sites was 0238, or 22 minutes prior to H-Hour. We went out to the flight line to inform Dick Cody, to cancel all the afternoon flights, and ensure the maintenance folks started preparing aircraft for flights that night.

Dick was working at his aircraft, talking to his maintenance guys, and checking his aircraft forms. He came over to our car and we told him the timing of H-hour. All he said was, "Shit Hot!" and said he'd meet me at our hootch at 2130 with all of his crews. I then went over to the '53s and told the guys to finish configuring the birds and to go back to quarters for a 1600 meeting.

At that meeting, I informed everyone about the mission that night. I told them to write a letter, get a nap, and be dressed and ready at 2100 for another short meeting. The guys were quiet about the news but obviously excited and apprehensive. They knew they were ready and that the war was probably the only way home, but they also didn't know how much resistance all this would encounter. The war planning had a worst case of 2 percent losses of the strike fighters going into Iraq. So, up to six to 10 shoot-downs could happen in the first days, meaning our guys doing rescue would probably spend a lot of time flying around in hostile territory trying to pick people up. Since for every 50 Iraqi soldiers there was expected to be an SA-7 or SA-14 [surface to air missile], we anticipated some real danger and possible losses of our MH-53s. The crews scheduled to go to Rafha to stand rescue alert – Capt. [Tim] Minish's

and Capt. [Tom] Trask's – really were faced with the greatest uncertainty. The four crews ([Corby] Martin's, [Ben] Pulsifer's, [Mike] Kingsley's, and [Bob] Leonik's) planning to lead the Apaches on the two radar sites would not face such uncertainty until they completed that mission and took up rescue alert posture at Ar'ar.

Staff Sgt. Jeff Morrison and Master Sgt. Dick Pinkowski had engineered a setup to use our fuel dump tubes and some fire hoses with some nozzles procured off the local economy to dump fuel through the hoses and refuel the Apaches. The guys worked up and verified this method would work; it was far from a certifiable safe operation, but if we had to use it, we had the helicopters configured. We had the kits, hoses, everything on board if we had to use them. We also had a lot of refueling equipment set up at Ar'ar so the Apaches could be refueled and get moving as soon as they landed.

Dick Cody, in trying to prepare for the mission, had restructured his helicopter loads. He could carry an external auxiliary fuel tank on each Apache in place of one of the racks of missiles. In so doing, he wrote new procedures on how to configure and load his helicopters so they had enough fuel to execute the mission. Still, each

An MH-53J Pave Low III helicopter machine gunner from the 16th Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida, mans his mini gun as he searches for threats while his aircraft refuels during a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Pave Low's mission was low-level, long-range, undetected penetration into hostile areas, and it was a perfect fit for Task Force Normandy. The Pave Low fleet has since been retired.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. MANUEL TREJO



Commanders and staff of the 1st Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (Attack) after the raid. Maj. Gen. Richard A. Cody, then a lieutenant colonel and the battalion commander, is seated at center.

tank was new to his helicopter and hopefully they would all work and feed fuel. If any of them were unable to feed fuel, we were going to have an Apache in trouble. We had all the back-up plans in place to get them out of the desert if anybody got low on fuel for any reason.

As it turned out, the tanks worked and all of us guys flew really quite well on the mission. It went perfectly that night. We had our briefing and we stood there and we said, "here we go." We tried not to tell all the maintenance guys what we were up to, but everybody knew it was our job to start the war. There wasn't much to say, except we were the right people for the job and we knew we had gotten ready for the job properly. We knew we were poised on the point of history of starting a pretty significant war for our country. We had nothing left to do but go fly the mission. It went exactly as planned.

We crossed the border 12 minutes after 2 in the morning for the first formation. Corby Martin's flight had the westernmost target; the east target was led by Mike Kingsley's crew and Bob Leonik's as the second helicopter on their wing. I flew as co-pilot with Leonik. We had Ben Pulsifer and his crew as No. 2 behind Corby. The 1/101 Battalion commander, Col. Cody, flew the trail helicopter in the formation led by Kingsley.

We were tensed and on the lookout as we flew the 40 minutes in Iraq before the war was to start. We were listening and looking for something to happen; nothing

did. No one seemed to notice – no tracers of ground fire, and nothing we could hear on the radios. It was anticlimactic, really. Both formations crossed the release point for the Apaches to get in the firing position within 5 seconds of their established time on target, and both formations (based on what we believe our timing was) laid Hellfire missiles on the communications vans of each of the two radar sites within 5 or 10 seconds of each other. Within about 3 minutes, the rest of the radar sites had taken fire and the buildings were in flames. The mission was a perfect success. The Iraqis now had no eyes to see with over a large portion of their border, and a coalition air armada streamed into the country above our two helicopter formations. I do not believe anybody detected our initial wave of fighters going into Iraq.

We had no hits against our helicopters; however, we did take some fire. Corby Martin's formation did have a couple of SA-7s fired at them. The SA-7s seemed to be fired accurately. The crew members of the Pave Low called out the inbound missiles. Berrett Harrison and Terry Null made the call for the helicopters to break and

THIS IS NO PLACE FOR **AMATEURS.**



Some optics companies slap "tactical" on an off-the-shelf consumer product and think that makes it suitable for professionals. It doesn't.

Nightforce MIL-SPEC riflescopes are purpose-built to exceed MIL-STD 810G requirements. For over a decade, USSOCOM forces have relied upon Nightforce under the most brutal conditions imaginable. We build our riflescopes to be utterly rugged, reliable and repeatable... mission after mission, operation after operation. Just like the professionals who use them.



MIL-SPEC 4-16x42 F1



MIL-SPEC 5-25x56 F1

Two of our newest riflescopes, created to maximize the versatility provided by first focal plane reticle placement. Offered with .250 MOA or .1 Mil Radian adjustments and proprietary Nightforce reticles as well as the Horus H59 and TReMoR3. The 4-16x42 F1 is streamlined and compact, adaptable to a wide range of weapons platforms. Our 5-25x56 F1 is one of the world's premier long-range riflescopes, exceeding the capabilities of any known caliber and high-BC bullet.

NIGHTFORCE®

Above: A coalition special operations service member fires his sniper rifle from a hilltop during a firefight near Nawa Garay village in the Kajran district of Afghanistan's Daykundi province, April 3, 2012. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jacob Dillon.



Nightforce Optics, Inc. / MIL-GOV-LE ■ 706.434.8953 ■ militaryinfo@nightforceoptics.com ■ NightforceOptics.com

INTRODUCING THE OPTIMUS



- Highly capable, small, light weight system
- Smart tactical in-ear hearing protection
- Monitor up to 3 or 4 nets*
- 20M immersible control box
- Eliminates crosstalk to secure comms
- Adjustable mounting clips for left / right hand preference



*Requires dual net radio

For additional information, or to request test and evaluation units, please contact us at 866.325.1731 or info@silynxc.com.

PROTECTION FROM WITHIN®



Two AH-64A Apache helicopters pass over the desert during Operation Desert Shield. Each helicopter is armed with a pair of 19-round launchers for 2.75-inch folding-fin aerial rockets; the helicopter at right is also carrying eight AGM-114 Hellfire missiles. During the Task Force Normandy mission, the 101st's Apaches flew with a fuel tank on one stub wing and four Hellfires on the other.

to jettison some flares to decoy the missiles. The flares did not seem to be effective as the missiles did not swerve at all toward them. The jinking of the helicopters, plus the IRCMs [infrared countermeasures], seemed to be what made the missiles miss the helicopters. Everybody returned – although a little bit frightened by the experience – safely.

Kingsley's formation went to Ar'ar to refuel and stood by for search and rescue operations while Martin's formation refueled in the air and returned to Al Juf. Tom Trask and Tim Minish took their crews and airplanes over to Rafha to stand by for search and rescue operations, out of Rafha into central Iraq. We were very surprised that there were no shoot-downs reported to us the first night.

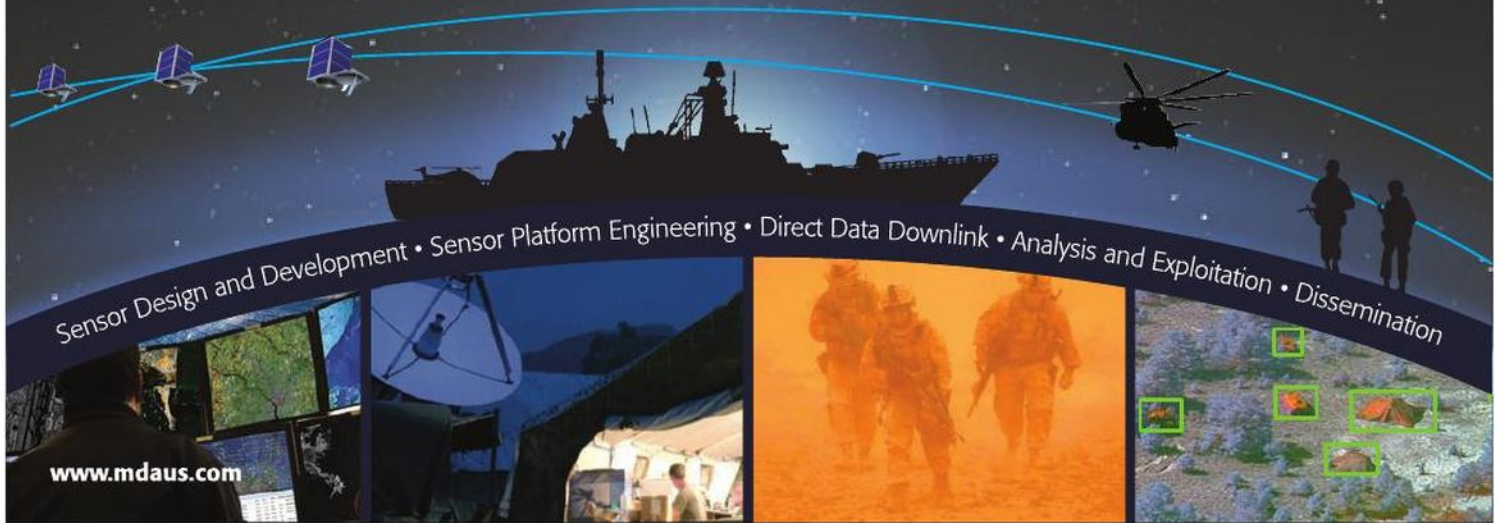
We learned later that one Navy plane went down under fire with the wingman reporting it exploded and no expectation of a survivor. My expectation was 2 percent losses among the fighters. These were realistic expectations that I think all the generals had signed up to. Also, the strike aircraft achieved an almost perfect success rate on hitting their targets. That made for a lot of success down the road in the war plan. We like to think, and we do believe, that the first mission against those radar sites had something to do with the great success that air power enjoyed in our strike and fighter operations over Iraq.

This history remains incomplete until I finish the story of the part played by Bobby Jenkins, who had volunteered to come in from his retirement to try to help. Well, as I said previously, Bobby arrived in Saudi a little later than I'd promised; he got there after Christmas on the 28th of December instead of before Christmas. He briefed in on all the ways we were doing business with Larry Hunter and Dick Pinkowski. I went into the month of January with Ski and Bobby as the ranking flight engineer and the ranking gunner. They worked over the training schedule for classes on the threats, how many gun training flights,



MDA INFORMATION SYSTEMS LLC
a U.S. company

Delivering *Timely* End to End Intelligence to the SOF Warfighter



GET THE UPPER HAND...
AND KEEP IT.



THE VENOM® PRODUCT LINE FROM CSI

A family of high-capacity non-lethal grenade launchers designed to be fully interchangeable for mounted use on vehicles, tripod mounts, and static installations. Expanded in 2014, the VENOM® product line offers non-lethal solutions for a variety of calibers and ranges.

LIGHT WEIGHT // VERSATILE
MULTI-CALIBER & TACTICAL SOLUTIONS



www.combinedsystems.com



A helicopter crewman from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) stands beside an AH-64A Apache helicopter as it is prepared for takeoff during Operation Desert Shield. The helicopter is armed with an M230A1 30 mm automatic cannon beneath its cockpit and is carrying AGM-114 Hellfire missiles on its wing pylon.

and how many desert landings and air refueling flights we needed before the U.N. deadline in the middle of January. They also ensured that all the tent areas were cleaned up, including the snack bar, which was seeing a lot of traffic during the cold weather of winter.

When the war began, I flew into Iraq, crossing the border about 45 minutes before the first bombs would fall on Baghdad. I was watching the helicopter in front of me; piloted by Mike Kingsley, it was the first coalition aircraft to cross the border. Among those in Kingsley's six-man crew were Ski and Bobby Jenkins, leading the way as we finally got onto the road that would get us home. I couldn't help but pause in my work as Leonik's co-pilot and think of Bobby, the most voluntary of volunteers, and of Dottie. I said a short prayer for his safety.

The next day when I finally had done all my debriefs and reports, I left the offices back at Al Jounf and I drove

to our barracks after about 39 hours without sleep. Upon arriving in the parking lot, I pulled up beside Bobby, who was standing beside a barrel stirring burning trash. I asked him if he'd slept any. He said a little, but the hootch was getting dirty and he needed to get rid of the trash. He said he liked to have a fire on cold winter days and the warmth felt good. Although he hadn't felt it during the flight the night before, he said he really had a chill when he got back, said he couldn't sleep much when the place was dirtied up and needed cleaning. I walked around the corner toward the door and ran into Ski, carrying a bag of trash. He said we had only been in this new barracks for two days and the place needed a GI Party to clean it up. He said the guys would be waking up soon and all the enlisted crews not taking up the rescue alert tonight would be assigned detail duty to get things cleaned up. I walked then into the kitchen area and Master Sgt. Mike Lael was sitting at the table writing out the detail assignments. He left a blank in there for an officer to be assigned to participate each day on cleaning up the kitchen. He said that the pilot schedulers had agreed to put a name in on each day to have the officers help out with the housework.

Things being under control, I went to bed. ■



The Ravens and the Secret Air War in Laos

By Dwight Jon Zimmerman

TWO WARS WERE BEING WAGED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA in the 1960s and early 1970s. One was the “public war” in Vietnam. Highly publicized and highly controlled from Washington, it had all the media trappings associated with major military operations. The other was a “secret war” in Laos. Waged under the tightest of security, little oversight, and with minimal assets compared to the conflict in Vietnam, its objective was to interdict and destroy the flow of men, equipment, and supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. Responsibility for conducting day-to-day air operations, in what one pilot called a “high risk, no-bullshit war,” was assigned to volunteers operating under the call sign “Ravens,” a small group of unconventional and incredibly fearless forward air controllers thinly disguised as civilian operatives.

The reason the campaign in Laos had to be waged in secret was because the terms of the Geneva Accords signed between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) on July 23, 1962, guaranteed the neutrality of the Kingdom of Laos, a landlocked nation abutting Vietnam’s western border. One of the provisions in the accords was the requirement that all foreign military forces had to leave Laos. Though the United States complied, North Vietnam ignored it.

Laotian Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma’s request for American military aid against North Vietnam’s violation presented President John F. Kennedy’s administration with a quandary: how to comply with the prince’s request without violating the accords. Another concern was that official American military involvement might inspire a tit-for-tat response



OPPOSITE: Raven Capt. John Mansur with his unmarked O-1 Bird Dog. White phosphorous rockets hang under the wing.

LEFT: A Butterfly Pilatus PC-6 Turbo Porter demonstrates its STOL capabilities from a dirt airstrip.

BELOW: Butterfly Forward Air Controllers with a Pilatus PC-6 Turbo Porter.



by China and the Soviet Union that risked escalating hostilities, touching off World War III.

But Laos' strategic location, along with the fear that doing nothing would cause the country to go communist, caused Kennedy to direct the Air Force to formulate a plan to assist Laos. Working in partnership with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the result was a covert operation placed under the command of America's ambassador to Laos, William Sullivan, and later his successor, G. McMurtrie Godley, who closely controlled all American activities there. Air Force Attaché Col. Gus Sonnenburg and his successors directed air operations. The covert air program began modestly with the deployment in 1963 of four combat control team sergeants, call sign "Butterfly."

To get around the Geneva Accords restrictions, the Air Force Butterfly non-commissioned officers (NCOs) (and all

subsequent volunteers) were scrubbed of their military identity and given a new civilian cover for the duration of their deployment in Laos, a process colorfully referred to as "sheep dipping." Sitting in the co-pilot's seat of the spotter aircraft, flown by Air America pilots, Butterflies would issue targeting instructions to Thai, Laotian, and later Hmong pilots trained through Project Water Pump. Originally created to teach indigenous and Thai pilots how to conduct search and rescue missions from forward bases along the Laotian border with Vietnam, Water Pump was soon expanded to train pilots for combat roles.

The Butterfly program came to an abrupt end in April 1966 when Gen. William Momyer, the 7th Air Force commander, learned that the Butterflies were NCOs and not jet fighter pilots, per doctrine. The following month, on May 5, 1966, Air Force 1st Lts. Jim F. Lemon and Truman



SUPPRESSOR
SOCOM556-RC

NSN: 1005-01-599-6997

FLASH HIDER / ADAPTER
FH556RC-1/2-28
(Sold Separately)

NSN: 1005-01-559-7048



USSOCOM SELECTED THE WORLD'S ULTIMATE SUPPRESSOR. SO SHOULD YOU.

The SureFire SOCOM556-RC suppressor was selected by U.S. Special Operations Command as first among all competitors, in the most extensive and rigorous suppressor evaluation in history. Its patent-pending front plate and advanced gas-flow dynamics virtually eliminate first-round flash. The entire line of SOCOM suppressors are the most advanced models ever built—and feature SureFire's legendary quality, durability, and minimal point-of-impact shift. Accurate. Proven. SureFire.

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

 WATCH VIDEO SERIES SUREFIRE.COM/SUPPRESSOR-SERIES

SUREFIRE.

www.surefire.com/suppressors

"T.R." Young, upon returning to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base after directing air strikes at the demilitarized zone separating North and South Vietnam, were presented with an offer they couldn't refuse by their commanding officer: Volunteer for a secret program, and a variety of minor disciplinary breaches including "rat-racing" (unauthorized acrobatics in O-1 Bird Dogs) and furniture broken during an excessive outburst of enthusiasm at a recent party would not appear in their personnel files. The lieutenants volunteered and the Raven program was launched.

The Ravens were part of a new air campaign in Laos begun in 1967 under the code name Palace Dog/Project 404, intended to aid the Laotians and especially the Hmong in their fight against the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese. Forward Air Controllers (FACs) for the program included pilots trained by Col. Henry "Heinie" Aderholt following his tour of duty as commander of the 56th Air Commando Wing at Nakhon Phanom. After that deployment, he was assigned deputy chief of staff for operations at the Special Air Warfare Center (now U.S. Air Force Special Operations School) at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. After completion of their training and upon arriving for duty in Vietnam, the FACs were informed that after six months, they could volunteer for special duty through the Steve Canyon Program. After being successfully vetted and screened, the volunteers were sent to the American Embassy at the Laotian capital of Vientiane, where they were sheep-dipped and assigned.

"They told us after you'd done your six-month tour in Vietnam, if you still hadn't got enough of it, they had some kind of a special mission that might be available. That was all they would say. They didn't say anything else other than that."

A typical introduction to the Ravens was that of Alan Poe (a pseudonym), who was a fighter pilot turned FACs. "I went down to Hurlburt Field, Florida, and was trained as a FAC, and then was sent to Vietnam. When we processed in through Saigon as a FAC, we had an in-country briefing, and they told us after you'd done your six-month tour in Vietnam, if you still hadn't got enough of it, they had some kind of a special mission that might be available. That was all they would say. They didn't say anything else other than that."

But Poe quickly grew bored and frustrated in South Vietnam. He flew to Saigon and requested the "special mission."

"They called it the Steve Canyon Program at the time. There were about 25 Ravens in country, mostly lieutenants and some captains. They were doing all kinds of crazy stuff – young guys with airplanes and rockets and guns. We used to say they were like Pancho Villa's raiders but not quite as disciplined."

Unmarked Cessna O-1s in Laos. The Bird Dog was the most numerous Raven aircraft.





A Raven with his backseater and a U-17 loaded with 2.75-inch white phosphorus rockets at 20 Alternate.

Mavericks, with an aggressiveness and courage bordering on the foolhardy and stamina to endure flying 12 or more hours a day under some of the most harrowing combat and weather conditions, the Ravens and their Hmong counterparts, the Nokateng (Swooping Bird), fought the war from bases at Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Pakse, Savannakhet, and Long Chieng (or Long Tieng), flying to war in small, slow observation aircraft and trainers.

"We had the O-1, and then we had the U-17, which is a four-place Cessna 185, a tail-dragger," Poe said. "We used that when we had to take along some interpreters or something like that, and it had longer legs. Then we had T-28s. We had the Navy version, which was 1,500 horsepower, and carried rockets. It also had .50-calibers in the wings. I flew the U-17 because it had longer legs, but it was almost interchangeable, really, with the O-1. Not everyone was checked out on the T-28. Usually the Head Raven and maybe the site commander were checked out on the T-28 ... and a few others, but not many."

The Ravens flew their small, slow aircraft day after day, and sometimes at night, over the mountains and jungles of Laos, spotting targets for Air Force, Navy, and Laotian aircraft carrying heavier ordnance. To say that the flights were dangerous is an understatement. Of the

191 who served as Ravens, 31 paid for their dedication with their lives.

"Ravens flew unmarked airplanes in civilian clothes, and most of them just looked like ragtag cowboys, if you want to know the truth about it," said Poe. "We were basically outside the Geneva Convention when it came right down to it. We didn't have ID cards. All our military gear was left back at Udorn. When we crossed over into Laos, there was nothing. We had Laotian driver's licenses and things like that, and guys would jokingly ask, 'What happens if we get shot down? What are we going to tell the captors?' They said, 'Eh, tell 'em you're a forest ranger.' It was all tongue-in-cheek, of course, but there wasn't much you could do."

"If you're in Vietnam, you're a military combatant under the Geneva Convention. But in Laos, we were flying basically as soldiers of fortune, I guess, for lack of a better term, so we didn't fall under the Geneva Convention, and they could do basically anything they wanted to. I don't know anybody that ever went down that got out unless Air America or the Air Force rescued them almost right away."

While the Ravens participated because they were volunteers, their Hmong counterparts fought because it was their country. Raven Maj. Mike Cavanaugh said, "In close, they were damned accurate. They liked to get down there and mix it up with the bad guys." The best pilot among

“They were doing all kinds of crazy stuff – young guys with airplanes and rockets and guns. We used to say they were like Pancho Villa’s raiders but not quite as disciplined.”

the Hmong, and his admirers argued the best combat pilot in Laos regardless of nationality, was Ly Leu (also spelled Lee Lue). A schoolteacher and son-in-law to the charismatic Hmong leader Gen. Vang Pao, Capt. Ly Leu was the first Hmong to volunteer for Project Water Pump. After completing T-28 training and earning his wings at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, he returned to Laos to wage war against the communists. His motto was “Fly ‘til you die”

The Ravens who worked and fought with him loved him. One Raven who observed Ly Leu in action recalled that in strafing runs, it was not unusual for him to fly 20 feet above the ground and that his idea of strafing “was to stick a .50-caliber gun in the enemy’s ear and pull the trigger.”

From dawn to dusk, Ly Leu flew non-stop, as many as 10 missions a day. After returning from a mission, to reduce downtime he’d assist in loading ordnance for the next mission before flying off again. When he landed at dusk, he was so tired he had to be lifted out of the cockpit. Ly Leu averaged 120 missions a month and racked up more than 5,000 sorties during his career. On July 12, 1969, the newly promoted Maj. Ly Leu flew his final mission. Attacking Pathet Lao forces in Moung Soui, northwest of the Plaines des Jarres, he was shot down and killed by

enemy anti-aircraft fire. Posthumously promoted by Vang Pao to lieutenant colonel, in gratitude the Americans posthumously awarded Ly Leu the Silver Star.

The commitment in Laos was the largest CIA operation up to that time, but because there were never enough indigenous pilots, airstrikes by American aircraft continued to increase and the greatest need was for FACs constantly over the battlefield.

“We worked under the ambassador [Godley] all the time,” said Poe. “The ambassador controlled what was going on. We’d go up there and have a briefing every day or two, and he’d tell us where we could go and what we could do, and he basically ran the whole show as far as targeting was concerned.

“What *actually* happened was, at 20 Alternate, we’d attend an evening briefing, which was joint between Vang Pao and the local CIA guy – they called him CAS [Controlled American Source] up there – and then they would actually modify whatever Godley said to fit the circumstances. We did pretty much, I think, stick to the guidelines of where the ambassador said we couldn’t go ... but the CIA and the Hmong, and the local guys up there, they knew pretty well what they wanted to get done.

A Ravens T-28 flies over the mountainous terrain of Laos, loaded with underwing rocket pods.





► TURN-KEY FOB SUPPORT

Our rapidly deployable, scalable and code-compliant facilities include shelter systems, kitchens/DFACS, showers & restrooms, laundry equipment & service and expeditionary camps.

DEPLOYEDRESOURCES.COM

(315) 281-0039

MADE IN THE USA



EYES ON TARGET

Powerful and portable thermal imaging.



The World's **Sixth Sense™**

"That's where our targeting came from. And then the pilots themselves would just get together in the morning and decide who's going where, and they'd all leap off and go out and see what they could find. Basically it was like trolling around and see what you could come up with."

Cavanaugh was a Raven in 1969. He recalled in Orr Kelly's book *From a Dark Sky: The Story of U.S. Air Force Special Operations* that the intensity of action over Laos caused them to become extraordinarily adept at spotting signs of enemy presence. "One time," he recalled, "I saw bushes which came to a 90-degree angle. The clever devil that I am, I know that bushes don't grow in 90-degree angles. That's all I had to go on; I hit it with a set of fighters. I uncovered pallet after pallet of 122 mm rockets. ... [W]e had secondary explosions for two solid days."

Though Ravens operated throughout Laos, their major base was at Long Chieng. Located southwest of the Plaine des Jarres in Xiangkhouang Province in the north central highlands of Laos, Long Chieng (usually referred to as Lima Site 20 Alternate, or just "20 Alternate") was located in a mountainous valley at an elevation of 3,100 feet. The Hmong are mountain dwellers, and Vang Pao made Long Chieng his headquarters, eventually gathering 30,000 troops into his guerrilla army. At its peak of operations, Long Chieng had a population of more than 40,000, and its airfield conducted about 400 flights a day, making it one of the busiest in the world. Long Chieng gained a reputation of being "the most secret place in the world," because despite its size (it was the second-largest city in Laos after the capital, Vientiane, and had the world's largest Hmong population), it never appeared on any map.

Compared to the air war over Vietnam, the forces available in Laos were negligible – the number of Ravens in Laos at any one time was always small, and Vang Pao's *de facto* air arm often numbered fewer than a dozen serviceable aircraft. Even at the height of the war, there were never more than 22 Ravens at any one time, according to Christopher Robbins' excellent book *The Ravens*.

"Typically on a site we would have four O-1s, one U-17, and no T-28s," Poe said. "We had one T-28 at 20 Alternate and one down in Vientiane. The guys would fly two, three, four missions every day sometimes. They'd run their airplanes out of gas, come back, refuel, and take off again."

Even so, they were not alone in the skies. Raven FACs, who also flew a grueling schedule, became expert in calling in Air Force assets when needed, whether it was to aid Hmong ground troops in danger of being overrun or taking out a target of opportunity.

One Raven's routine was to do a dawn patrol scouting flight before breakfast, looking for such signs of enemy activity as smoke from cook fires that might indicate an enemy bivouac, or trails where the early morning dew had been brushed away by troop traffic. Upon returning for breakfast, he'd have a checklist of locations to investigate later that morning.

"We'd fly around at 1,000 feet or less and we'd have binoculars – after a while you're trained to know what looks like it's really something or what's just fake," Poe said. "Ordinarily we'd fly around and we would not get shot at at all. They didn't want to give away their position, because they knew the minute they shot at a Raven, all hell was going to break loose. So we pretty well could fly around wherever we wanted to, with some exceptions,

and then once a Raven would spot something with binoculars or whatever, you'd fly away from it for a little bit and call the airborne command post." Strike aircraft were marshaled down to a rendezvous with the Raven, who then took them in to the target and indicated it for them. "You'd kind of stay out of the area and then at the last minute you'd go and fire a Willy Pete [white phosphorous] rocket right in to where your target was. Then the fighters would come in and drop the bombs on that area," Poe said.

The grind of the operations took its toll on the Ravens. Several flights a day over almost universally hostile territory, with little hope of rescue if downed, led to burnout in some pilots or a dangerous recklessness in others, which was one of the reasons for the six-month tours. It allowed evaluation of the pilots' mental states before things went too far. The sheer bomb tonnage controlled by Raven FACs is astounding. More than 1,600,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Laos, more than on Germany during World War II.

"The way the Ravens worked, you went for a six-month tour, and at the end of six months, the Air Force said, 'We'll give you 30 days paid leave, and you can go anywhere in the world that you would like to go and we'll buy you a ticket to go there,'" said Poe. "So if you wanted to go to Geneva you could do it; or you could go to Paris, you could go to the States, or whatever. That was only if you had come back for the second tour; so if you'd done one tour, and wanted to go the second one, then they gave you this 30 days vacation. I went down to Sydney and stayed down there for a week or so. But after the second tour, only a very few were allowed to go on to a third six-month period, because they were getting to the point of becoming self-destructive. We'd have to send most of them home at that point, and say, 'We really appreciate everything that you've done, but we just can't use you up here now.'"

By 1969, Raven-guided air operations had become so deadly and successful that Vang Pao was able to switch from guerrilla to conventional war and launch an offensive that wrested control of the Plaine des Jarres from the Pathet Lao.

Ultimately, though, the fight against the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao was doomed to failure. The United States would pull out of Southeast Asia, and with the loss of U.S. aid, Laos had no hope of continuing to hold off its enemies. "We had led him down the garden path," Godley said of Prince Phoumo in *The Ravens*. "Let's face it, we were cutting and running. We pulled the rug out from under him. Once we were out of Vietnam the only way we could have protected Laos was with an Army corps. It was totally out of the question and we knew it. We were licked. There was nothing to be done."

The Ravens fought until the very end, until they were ordered to stop flying and to leave the country. There are many lessons, both good and bad, to be gleaned from the secret air war in Laos. One of the good ones, and an important one, might be how to conduct a successful low-intensity air war on a shoestring. The record of the Ravens' accomplishment demonstrated that when the time came, a handful of highly skilled, dedicated, resourceful, and courageous men could accomplish a mission others regarded as impossible. ■



Toffey's Special Mission V-2 provided the technology that kick-started America's space program. Bumper 8 was an ambitious two-stage rocket program launched in July 1950 that topped a V-2 missile base with a WAC Corporal rocket. The upper stage was able to reach then-record altitudes of almost 400 kilometers, higher than even modern space shuttles flew. Launched under the direction of the General Electric Company, the Bumper Project was used primarily for testing rocket systems and for research on the upper atmosphere. Bumper rockets carried small payloads that allowed them to measure attributes including air temperature and cosmic ray impacts. Seven years later, the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I* and *Sputnik II*, the first satellites launched into Earth orbit. In response, in 1958, the United States created NASA and launched *Explorer 1*.



Special Mission V-2

**Col. Holger Toftoy and the
Operation That Brought German
Rocket Technology to America**

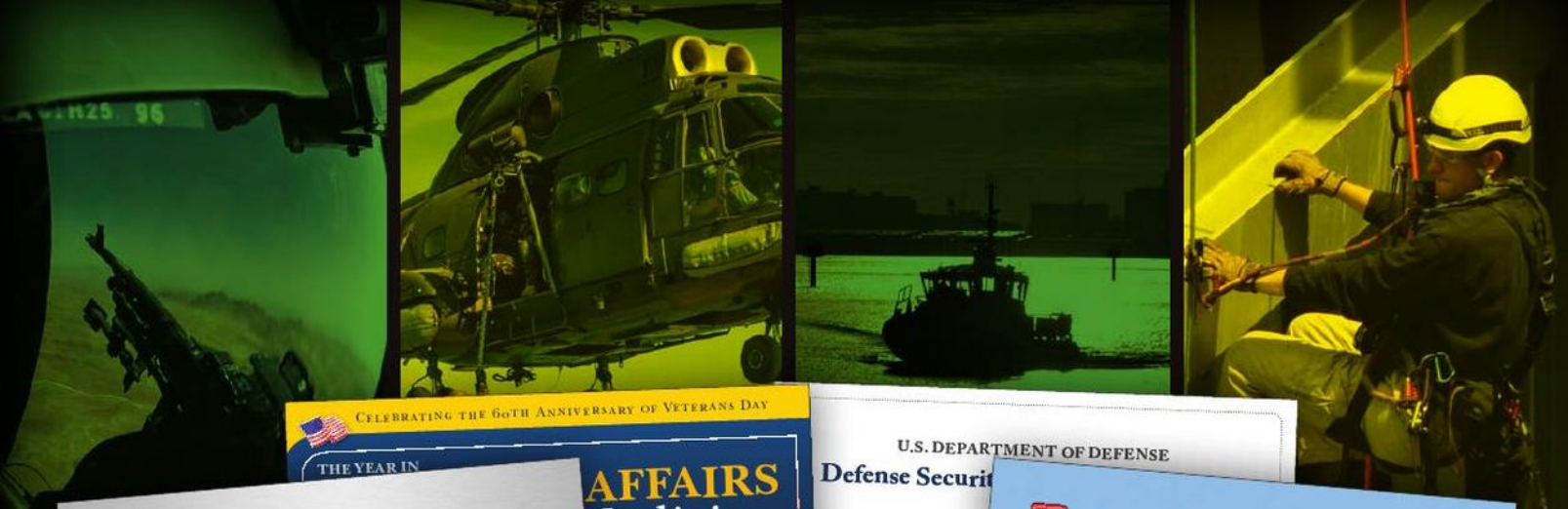
By Dwight Jon Zimmerman

“By using German V-2 missiles ... our designers will save years of research and millions of dollars. We profit by the 12 years of intensive German research and gain practical knowledge of what not to do as well as what to do in developing the weapons which are revolutionizing the art of war.” – Col. Holger N. Toftoy

IN THE SPRING OF 1945, NAZI GERMANY WAS IN ITS DEATH throes. While advancing combat troops sought destruction of Germany’s ability to wage and prolong the war, within the ranks of the Allied armies were a plethora of specialized teams tasked with sifting through the chaotic detritus of destroyed factories, facilities, and cities, defeated troops and displaced people, and restrain, avert, and retrieve from destruction (and each other) the advanced technology elements of German industry and science as well as the men who had designed and unleashed some of the world’s most awesome weapons. Whoever won this high technology scavenger hunt through Germany would have a major lead in the opening round of the next generation of advanced weaponry.

It was a race the United States military was determined to win. The U.S. Army Air Force had Operation Lusty, headed by Col. Harold E. Watson; the U.S. Navy had its Naval Technical Mission, led by Commodore Henry A. Schade. And the U.S. Army had Col. Holger Toftoy, chief of the Army Ordnance Technical Intelligence (AOTI) in Europe. He was the commander of a force tasked with finding and evaluating captured enemy ordnance, weapons, and equipment. Its initial intent was to put the advanced German military technology to use against the Japanese. But Toftoy saw a more important long-term use for the technology and experts he was ordered to obtain. As it turned out, he was the right man in the right place at the right time.

Holger Nelson “Ludy” Toftoy was born in Marseilles, Illinois, in 1902. In 1926, he graduated from West Point. During the interwar years he served in the Coast Artillery Corps in Hawaii, as an instructor at West Point, and as Mine Battery Commander on the Pacific Ocean side



DEFENSE IN DEPTH

The Year in Special Operations | U.S. Army Materiel Command
The Year in Veterans Affairs and Military Medicine | Defense Security Cooperation Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Building Strong | U.S. Coast Guard Outlook



Hermann Oberth (front) with officials of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at Huntsville, Alabama, in 1956. Clockwise around Oberth: 1) Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger (seated). 2) Maj. Gen. H.N. Toftoy, commanding officer and person responsible for "Special Mission V-2" and "Project Paperclip," which took scientists and engineers out of Germany after World War II to design rockets for American military use. Many of the scientists later helped to design the Saturn V rocket that took the Apollo 11 astronauts to the moon. 3) Dr. Robert Lusser, a Project Paperclip engineer who returned to Germany in 1959. 4) Dr. Wernher von Braun, director, Development Operations Division.

of the Panama Canal (then under U.S. jurisdiction). In 1938, he was stationed at the Submarine Mine Depot, Fort Monroe, Virginia, where he served for six years as chief of the Industrial and the Research and Development divisions. In that capacity, he oversaw the development of the controlled submarine mine system used in World War II that allowed for the transit of friendly ships, but was triggered when a hostile vessel passed.

His extensive knowledge of underwater mines caused him to be transferred to Europe in June 1944 to clear French ports of German booby-traps, starting with Cherbourg. In October 1944, Toftoy was appointed AOTI chief and based in the five-star Plaza Athénée Hotel in Paris. There, in the fashionable 8th Arrondissement and with a spectacular view of the Eiffel Tower, Toftoy was one of the American commanders participating in Project Overcast, the umbrella Anglo-American plan to "make full use of established German technical facilities and personnel before they were destroyed or disorganized." AOTI was the European extension of the Army Ordnance Department's missile program, begun in 1943, that coordinated work conducted by its own facilities, university think

tanks, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (the predecessor to NASA), and corporations, the most important of which was General Electric (GE).

Toftoy's superior at the Pentagon was Col. Gervais Trichel. Trichel instructed Toftoy to acquire 100 operational V-2s, along with as many relevant technical documents, manuals, machine tools, and spare parts as possible and ship them to White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico for further study, an operation Toftoy called Special Mission V-2. (The roundup of German scientists, engineers, and other technicians and their families was separately conducted, initially through Overcast and later in Operation Paperclip.)

Toftoy had organized his search teams into rapid response units. Three were in the field, one attached to each Army Group (the British Army's 21st, and the American Army's 12th and 6th), with a fourth, roving gypsy team that Toftoy used on personally directed independent missions. Each team was furnished with vehicles, cameras, radios, filing equipment and supplies, and qualified personnel able to identify, tag, and record their discoveries.

DID YOU KNOW?

SCI's newest generation of **TOCNET®** PROVIDES AIRCRAFT/GROUND PLATFORMS WITH A LIGHTWEIGHT AND LOW COST DIGITAL VOICE/DATA NETWORK, fully interoperable with the battlefield network.

For information on this and our other products and services visit us at: www.sci.com



Solutions for Tomorrow's Platforms...TODAY

SECURITY STEPS UP ITS GAME

EVOLVE 2 ADVANCE



ASIS IS THE PLACE TO STEP UP YOUR GAME IN 2015.

This is the global stage for the exchange of future-focused ideas, innovations, and mission-critical solutions. From facility and communications technologies to visionary leadership, professionals from across the public/private sectors experience it all here, 24/7 security in one place, at one time. With an education program designed to raise the bar even higher this year, come to advance your skill sets to deal with new operational challenges, new threats, new opportunities.

Make plans now to evolve at ASIS 2015, the world's most influential security event. Register today at www.securityexpo.org/SOC.



ASIS INTERNATIONAL
61ST ANNUAL
SEMINAR AND EXHIBITS

SEPT OCT
28-01

ANAHEIM
CALIFORNIA

**Get your FREE
exhibits pass with
early registration.**

Law Enforcement/Military Appreciation
Day is Sept. 30. See website for details.



FAR LEFT: Attendant with the wonders of German rocket science were the horrors of Nazi social science.

Dead workers lie in uneven rows on floors of barracks, found by the American 3rd Armored Division when it captured the German slave labor camp at Nordhausen.

LEFT: Lt. Col. Herbert Axter, Maj. Gen. Walter Dornberger, commander of the V-2 laboratory at Peenemünde; Dr. Wernher von Braun, inventor of the V-2 rocket; and Hans Lindenberg after they surrendered to U.S. troops in Austria, May 3, 1945.

V-1 and V-2 manufacturing and test facilities were originally all located on the Baltic Sea island of Usedom at Peenemünde near the present border with Poland. After a heavy RAF bombing raid in August 1943, production facilities were relocated, two in the south at Friedrichshafen on the Swiss-German border and in Austria near Wiener Neustadt (south of Vienna), one in the east near Riga, Latvia, and another roughly in the middle (and appropriately named "Mittelwerk") near Nordhausen in the Harz Mountains of central Germany. Riga fell to the Soviet Red Army in the fall of 1944. In April 1945, Peenemünde's remaining scientific personnel evacuated the facilities. V-2 program director Dr. Wernher von Braun and about 500 members of his group fled south to Oberammergau along the Austrian border, where they planned to turn themselves over to the Americans.

On April 11, Combat Command B (CCB) of the U.S. 3rd Armored Division reached Nordhausen. The Mittelwerk V-2 production facility, located in tunnels dug in the Harz Mountains, had been shut down the previous day, and the SS guards had all left. V-2s had been assembled by slave labor under appalling conditions, and the liberating soldiers were shocked and sickened by the sight of the emaciated survivors as well as the many dead.

CCB's intelligence officer, Maj. William Castille, inspected the V-2 assembly line, later describing the orderly rows of V-2 parts and subassemblies in the tunnels "like being in a magician's cave." He radioed news of CCB's discovery to Toftoy, who dispatched to the site an AOTI team located in Fulda, about 80 miles southwest, under command of Maj. James Hamill. Hamill's team included Maj. William Bromley, responsible for technical operations, and special adviser Dr. Louis Woodruff, an electrical engineering professor from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). A combing of the area revealed more treasures: an almost complete Henschel Hs 117 Schmetterling ("Butterfly")

antiaircraft missile and the guidance and control unit of a Henschel Hs 298 air-to-air missile; a wide variety of precision optical instruments for tracking guided missiles; a complete guidance unit for a Wasserfall-guided surface-to-air missile (a spinoff design of the V-2); and tons of priceless technical documents.

While it would be incorrect to say that finding the V-2s at Mittelwerk had been easy, now came the truly hard part: logging, organizing, and transporting their find out of the Mittelwerk to the port of Antwerp, Belgium, for the journey to New Mexico. The logistics challenges were daunting in the extreme: No document existed, or was ever found, that listed all the parts needed to complete an operational V-2, and no one in the area possessed the necessary knowledge; the transport unit under Toftoy's command, the 144th Ordnance Motor Vehicle Assembly Company, was stationed in Cherbourg, 770 miles west; and parts, partial assemblies, and complete V-2s were scattered throughout the area. Toftoy was burdened with vague orders from above that prevented him from using the full resources of the U.S. Army's technical services; unsympathetic local commanders who couldn't understand the urgency regarding what one of them called "this Buck Rogers stuff"; Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) orders that stated no captured war materiel could be removed from one occupation zone to another; a "gentleman's agreement" between the British and Americans that disposed captured advanced German weaponry between the two on a one-to-one basis except when only one such item was found – and then it would go to the British; and finally the imminent arrival of the Soviet Red Army. As part of their postwar plan for Germany, the Allies had divided the country into zones of occupation. The Mittelwerk area was going to be split between the British and the Soviet Union. Nordhausen was in what would be the Soviet zone.

Explosives - Narcotics - Precursors

Field Forensics Test Kits and Raman Spectrometers



EL-100

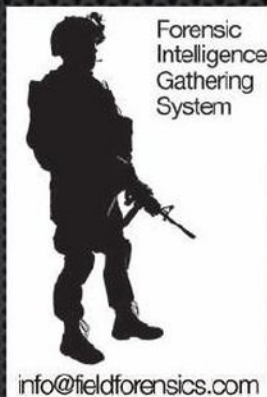
ELITE™, IDEX™,
ULTRA™, DABIT™,
TASKIT™ Pocket sized
color tests for explosives,
narcotics, and precursors

Colorimetric Test Kits



ULTRA-246

Simple, Rugged, &
Reliable Chemical
Detection & Identification
for Special Operations



Forensic
Intelligence
Gathering
System

info@fieldforensics.com

St. Petersburg, FL USA



FIELD FORENSICS

www.fieldforensics.com

HandyRam™ 785

Analyze found substances

Get results in 15 seconds

11 Hours on 2 AA Batteries

Weighs only 12oz



Handheld Spectroscopy

HandyRam™ 1064

Identify more materials with
reduced fluorescence





SCI

Standard Calibrations Inc.

NAVSEA certified DLSS, DSS, & HALO equipment service
Helping to keep the point of the spear its sharpest!



Norfolk (757) 549-6534
San Diego (619) 477-1668
www.standardcal.com



AEgis

**SECURING
A BETTER
FUTURE**

Risk Management • Asset Protection • Tactical Analysis

For more information, visit: www.aegisworld.us



LEFT: The damage done by a V-2 on a main intersection in Antwerp, Belgium, on a main supply line to Holland.

BELOW: Reconnaissance photo of a V-2 launch site at Peenemünde. The Allies were determined to have German missile technology.



Though Toftoy knew this, his actual marching orders were worded vaguely enough to allow him discretion regarding the capture and transporting of materials on his list, like the V-2, and he seized the opportunity with both hands. This resulted in some close-call chicanery by Special Mission V-2 personnel.

In addition to not having an inventory list of what comprised a complete V-2, the team discovered that 100 complete and operational V-2s didn't exist. As soon as a batch of V-2s was completed, off they went to the launch pads. Though about 50 V-2s, damaged in an American bombing raid, were found at the railroad marshalling yard at Nordhausen, Toftoy's men were literally forced to grab 100 of whatever was in sight and hope for the best.

When he got the news of the find at Mittelwerk, Toftoy immediately ordered two 10-ton semi-trailers dispatched. Only one arrived, the other suffering a mechanical breakdown. Meanwhile, Maj. Robert B. Staver, commander of another Special Mission V-2 team, arrived on the scene and managed to convince the commander of the 71st Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company, fortuitously stationed in Nordhausen, to lend him six of the company's 2.5-ton trucks. Working around the clock, rail cars were loaded and trains sent west – right beneath the noses of British and Soviet officers searching for the same thing.

During a period of nine days beginning on May 22, a total of 341 railway cars loaded with V-2 parts and documents traveled from Nordhausen to Erfurt, where custody of the cars was transferred to the U.S. Army Military Railway System that would transport them to Antwerp. Inevitably the traffic caught the attention of British intelligence personnel in Erfurt, who fired their own rocket about the American “theft” up through channels. British members of SHAEF filed a complaint with Allied Supreme Commander Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Sometimes red tape can work in one's favor. By the time action could be taken, everything the Special Mission V-2

teams had “liberated” was already aboard ships and en route to the United States.

Meanwhile, Staver's team had been ordered to retrieve 14 tons of V-2 documents buried in a sealed mine at Dörnten, soon to be part of the British sector. When a British Combined Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee (CIOS) team arrived to investigate the reasons for all the around-the-clock activity devoted to clearing a sealed mine shaft, Lt. H.M. Hochmuth managed to convince them that the American team was doing a survey of natural resources, and that the German miners they were overseeing were boxing iron ore for documentation.

On May 26, a group of Red Army officers arrived for a tour of Mittelwerk. Staver had no choice but to show them around. With the Soviets now knowing what the Americans were doing, Staver worried he'd run out of time (the Red Army was scheduled to take control on July 1) before obtaining everything he had been ordered to collect.

But through Herculean effort, their goal was met by May 31. The person most responsible for getting the work done was Bromley, and a grateful Toftoy awarded him the Bronze Star for his extraordinary effort. As it turned out, their race to do so was to a certain extent not necessary because, thanks to Soviet Union plans for a victory celebration in Berlin in June, the Red Army did not move in until July 14.

With the hard goods in hand and knowing only half the acquisition battle had been won, Toftoy turned his attention to the “soft” goods: the men responsible for designing and building the V-2, the most important of these being the program's director, von Braun. Toftoy was instrumental in helping these men and their families get to the United States through Operation Paperclip. After the war, Toftoy continued his involvement in the Army's rocket and missile program, eventually getting the nickname “Mr. Missile.” Toftoy retired in 1960 with the rank of major general. He died in 1967 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. ■

UIC

Universal
Improved
Carbine



Intentionally Superior

We started from the ground up, from custom designs, over-built components to fully ambidextrous controls. Nothing was spared, not one short-cut was taken. 



AMERICAN
DEFENSE MANUFACTURING



AD-DELTA



AD-BP



T1-10



AD-RECON

See our complete line at: admmfg.com admfirearms.com

Product Showcase



B.E. Meyers & Co. Inc. is currently in its 41st year as a family-owned defense business based in Redmond, Washington. As a company that has grown from humble beginnings to a state-of-the-art laser design and manufacturing firm, B.E. Meyers & Co. Inc. has been providing infrared systems to U.S. and NATO defense entities for the last 30 years. During that time, they have developed a reputation for quality, precision, and extended lifecycle reliability.

All of their products are designed, manufactured, and assembled at their 135,000-square meter facility in Redmond, where they are the design authority for the IZLID®, DIAL®, and GLARE® lines of hand-held and weapon mountable laser systems. With multiple defense entities approximately an hour away, B.E. Meyers & Co. Inc. works closely with experienced conventional units as well as special operations forces in the greater Pacific Northwest area to develop the next iterations of night fighting tools and capabilities.

"The feedback from these end-users is critical," says Matt Meyers, Director of Business Development and

second-generation owner of B.E. Meyers & Co. Inc. "As new product development takes place, design parameters must consider modern operational conditions which typically includes using combat equipment under stress, in the dark, with gloves on. The more advanced the system, the simpler it needs to be to operate under these conditions. This end-user focus takes part in our mechanical, electrical, and optical design engineering, and carries into large-scale manufacturing and production."

"We provide the end-user the capability to identify and illuminate targets with visible, Near Infrared, or out-of-band laser markers, providing both U.S. and NATO forces with a lightweight man-portable tool that allows you to mass fires and integrate combined assets onto battlefield targets, day or night," states Meyers.

With a reputation for ruggedized, precision laser systems for targeting, aiming, illumination, and Hail and Warning applications, B.E. Meyers & Co. products are currently used by all branches of the U.S. Department of Defense and are combat-proven in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the globe.

B.E. Meyers & Co., Inc. | 9461 Willows Road NE Redmond, WA 98052 | Phone: (800) 327-5648 | Fax: (425) 867-1759 | info@bemeyers.com

The Powerful Difference



We own and operate **BOTH** the commercial Model 234 Chinook and CH-47 Chinook. As a result, we provide superior logistic service and exceptional aircraft maintenance.

 **COLUMBIA
HELICOPTERS**
www.colheli.com 503-678-1222

COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FOR SENSITIVE MISSIONS



COMMUTER AIR TECHNOLOGY IS A PROVEN PROVIDER OF AIRBORNE INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR) SYSTEMS AND SERVICES.

We are highly experienced combat veterans delivering mission essential and fail-safe solutions. We specialize in systems integrations, operational testing and evaluation, combat mission support, ISR training and exercise support.



CommuterAirTechnology

AGC AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

www.commuterair.com

Fayetteville Technical Community College

Fayetteville Technical Community College offers associate degrees, certificates, and diplomas in over 190 program areas of study. The desire of the College is to honor the men and women who serve or have served in our armed forces by offering opportunities to take their military training and experience further; flexible, convenient options; and personal, one-on-one assistance. The College is home to the All American Veterans Center, staffed by veterans who understand military experiences and find solutions to respond to any veteran's need. At FTCC, the philosophy is "education for life," meaning that no matter where a person is along his or her journey of life, FTCC has something to offer. FTCC's Fort Bragg Center, located at the Bragg Training and Education Center, is staffed with a team of professionals eager to honor and serve our military, veterans, and their family members. Experience how FTCC can help.

Email fortbragg@faytechcc.edu or call (910) 678-1050.

www.faytechcc.edu

The Recon V thermal binocular is the most advanced, intuitive ultra-light handheld surveillance system in the world. Combining FLIR's unmatched thermal imaging capabilities with precise, accurate geolocation, the Recon V delivers long range target detection and identification. Full HD displays and continuous optical zoom reveal fine target detail and clear situational awareness. Built to withstand your demanding missions, and providing up to 8 hours runtime on standard AA batteries, the Recon V is the clear choice when success requires vision. FLIR products are Commercially Developed and Military Qualified to ensure the most cost-effective and trustworthy performance. Visit us at booth #1034 during SOFIC 2015 to see the future of Vision.



For more information visit
www.flir.com



The World's Sixth Sense™

THE FUTURE OF ADVANCED COMBAT PRECISION SNIPER RIFLES

The FN CSR™-20, or Compact Sniper Rifle, is the future of advanced combat precision sniper rifles. Leveraging and improving upon combat-proven architecture of the FN SCAR® family of weapons, the FN CSR™-20 provides a highly reliable, accurate and modular weapon system designed for easy operator and armorer level maintenance. The FN CSR™-20 is chambered in 7.62x51mm, features a sub-MOA, 16-inch, cold hammer-forged, chrome-lined barrel, monolithic aluminum receiver, and non-folding stock with adjustable cheekpiece.



fnhusa.com/scar-family

FNH USA



*Product in development.

For 35 years, Lewis Machine & Tool, LMT® has been designing and manufacturing high quality weapons without compromises. LMT® is proud to expand our line of products to include laser devices, including our Precision Aiming Laser. The PAL™ aimer is designed for carbine use and is a class 3B IR laser that offers an ultra-compact and light weight design with a quick-disconnect mount. The PAL™, offers an enhanced battery life of over 12 hours with a precision beam of 9mm at 20m. The unit runs on the operators choice of AA or 123A batteries with no change to the system. The laser has smooth dial-switch operation with precision adjustments for windage and elevation even while using gloves. The PAL™ comes with a remote switch on a tether and offers training mode as well as high power.

www.lmtdefense.com

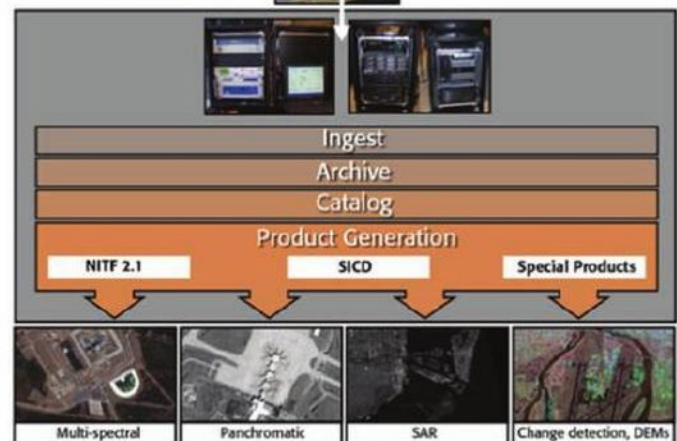


MDA INFORMATION SYSTEMS LLC *a U.S. company*

Transportable Ground Systems from MDA Information Systems LLC provide direct, in-theater access to the world's most capable commercial EO and SAR satellites. Our highly-transportable systems are based on a strong legacy of proven performance and offer broad support for current commercial imaging assets.

Our direct downlink systems provide GEOINT consumers with the fastest possible access to commercial imagery. With a direct downlink system, imagery products are made available to users just minutes after imaging. This advantage is multiplied when users are situated in remote locations and operating with low bandwidth communication links.

Our transportable systems significantly shorten the cycle between imaging and dissemination by enabling direct access to the satellite. Our systems utilize a high-performance processing platform based on transportable COTS equipment, providing scalability in terms of throughput and product scope.



Contact:
Stuart Waterman
Stuart.Waterman@mdaus.com

NEW FIRST FOCAL PLANE RIFlescOPES FROM NIGHTFORCE

Nightforce Optics, Inc has introduced new 4-16 x 42 F1 and 5-25 x 56 F1 riflescopes, created to maximize the advantages of a first focal plane reticle placement. Each is made in the USA. They incorporate the finest ED glass, producing outstanding light transmission and images of exceptional clarity, brilliance and contrast. Each includes the latest in Nightforce technology, including Digillum™ reticle illumination, patented ZeroStop™ or ZeroHold™ elevation adjustments, and side parallax adjustment.

The new F1 riflescopes are available in commercial and purpose-built MIL-SPEC configurations. For over a decade, Nightforce riflescopes have been proven in the hands of USSOCOM forces. Contact the Nightforce MIL-GOV-LE division at 706.434.8953, email militaryinfo@nightforceoptics.com, or visit www.NightforceOptics.com.



DID YOU KNOW?

SCI's newest generation of **TOCNET®** PROVIDES AIRCRAFT/GROUND PLATFORMS WITH A LIGHTWEIGHT AND LOW COST DIGITAL VOICE/DATA NETWORK, fully interoperable with the battlefield network.

For information on this and our other products and services visit us at: www.sci.com



Solutions for Tomorrow's Platforms...TODAY

Supporting the Warfighter with Next Generation Capabilities Today

Capabilities

Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR)

Wide-Area Airborne Persistent Surveillance (WAAPS)

Degraded Visual Environment (DVE) System Solutions

Light Air Support (LAS)
Radio-Controlled

Improvised Explosive Device (RCIED) Jammers

Transport Telemedicine Systems (TTS)

Tactical Radio Application Extension (SNC TRAX™)

SNC SIERRA
NEVADA
CORPORATION

www.sncorp.com

C4ISR - Gorgon Stare - WAAPS

C4ISR - MC-130

C4ISR - King Air - VADER

C4ISR - DO-328 - Multi-Mission

RCIED Jammers

C4ISR - PC-12 - Multi-Mission

C4ISR - C145 - Skytruck

SNC TRAX™

LAS - A29 - Super Tucano

DVE System Solutions

TTS

SEE OVERPOWER PREVAIL

Shown: M600 Ultra with
optional DS07 dual switch

THE NEW SCOUT LIGHT® MODELS

A powerful WeaponLight mounted to your rifle is standard operating procedure for most. But, there's nothing standard about the battle-proven **M600 Ultra**, which produces 500 TIR-lens-focused lumens of white light that reaches out well past 100 meters. The compact, dual-spectrum **M300V** offers infrared illumination for NVGs plus white light with the simple turn of its LED bezel. All Scout Lights were designed to identify threats and built for life. Never settle, own the best. SureFire.



Both models available in black & tan.

M600 Ultra
500 lumens

M300V
120 lumens | 100mW infrared

DS07
features tape and
pushbutton switch





GAME ON.

BUILT TO OWN THE TRACK, AND THE STREET



See the 2015 GSX-R lineup at suzukicycles.com

At Suzuki, we want every ride to be safe and enjoyable. So always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Never engage in stunt riding. Study your owner's manual and always inspect your Suzuki before riding. Take a riding skills course. For the course nearest you call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-446-9227. Suzuki engineered the GSX-Rs® for experienced riders. Suzuki firmly believes racing belongs in one place-on the racetrack. Suzuki, the "S" logo, and Suzuki model and product names are Suzuki Trademarks or ®. © Suzuki Motor of America, Inc. 2015.

OIW marine

A VIGOR INDUSTRIAL COMPANY

OIW Marine designs and builds mission-critical watercraft for combatant, unmanned, and port security applications.

With more than 30 years of marine-building experience, the dedicated OIW Marine team of engineers and craftsman brings solutions to your toughest maritime challenges.

MISSION-CRITICAL WATERCRAFT

- **Rapid concept** to prototype development.
- **Proven** unmanned surface vessels from concept development to detail design, including integration of complex propulsion and control systems.
- **Sophisticated** high-speed vessels for coastal patrol, payload delivery and insertion/extraction missions.
- **Cutting edge** aluminum and composite combatant craft with versatile, multi-mission capability.

OIW Marine teams consist of expert fabricators and technicians, supported by an experienced group of Program Managers, Mechanical, Electrical, Structural and Manufacturing Engineers, Project Controls Specialists, Document Control Experts, Contract Administrators, Quality Assurance and Quality Control Inspectors and Production Managers.

OIW Marine is a division of Oregon Iron Works, a Vigor Industrial company, providing the unique ability to leverage diverse technologies, manufacturing techniques, and systems integration prowess to better serve our customers.

CONTACT: OIW Marine • 9700 SE Lawnfield Road Clackamas, OR 97015 U.S.A. • 503.653.6300 OIWMarine.com

TROY UNIVERSITY: HOME OF THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

Whether you are attending college for the first time, returning to complete your education or pursuing a specialized degree, Troy University offers incredible opportunities and the personal approach to teaching that can help you achieve more than you thought possible. TROY calls it the "warrior spirit," and it's at the heart of everything we do.

Founded in 1887, TROY offers degrees in fields like business, education, nursing, computer science, psychology and criminal justice — some of the world's most in-demand career fields. Those seeking to expand their career opportunities can take advantage of Troy University's one-year Fast Track graduate programs in fields such as accounting, business administration, computer science, management, education and more.

TROY's focus on quality academic programs and student service has been documented by such publications as The Princeton Review's "Best in the Southeast," U.S. News & World Report's "Best for Veterans" and Military Times' "Best for Vets" rankings.

If anyone understands the warrior spirit, it's you. Strength and commitment are at the core of everything you do. You have served our country, now let TROY support you. Whether it's online or in class, our public university is equally dedicated to helping you accomplish your career goals.

Do what you love, and be great at it. That's the warrior spirit, and it's alive and well at Troy University.

To find out more about on-campus, in-class and online degree programs at TROY, visit troy.edu/workingwarrior or call 1-800-586-9771.

TROY

UNIVERSITY™



ZERO POINT

Visit us at Booth
#1818 at SOFIC

1st Line (Master EOD)



zeropointusa.com

TITAN



Titanium Grapple



products are not shown to size

757.721.6601

U.S. and Colombian parachutists jump out of a C-130 aircraft from an altitude of 15,000 feet as part of an international military free fall jump in Fort Tolemaida, Colombia July 30 as part of Fuerzas Comando 2014. The combined jump symbolized the multinational cooperation, mutual trust, readiness, and interoperability of special operations forces from both nations. The U.S. servicemembers are assigned to Special Operations Command South. An aircraft from the West Virginia Air National Guard supported the free fall jump.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PHOTO BY MAJ. EDWARD LAUER

